

KOGARATSU

THE ETAS'
TREASURE



REPÉRAGES
DUPUIS

1. General Equilibrium Analysis

What are the key components of a general equilibrium model?

1. Production

2. Consumption

3. Government

4. Markets

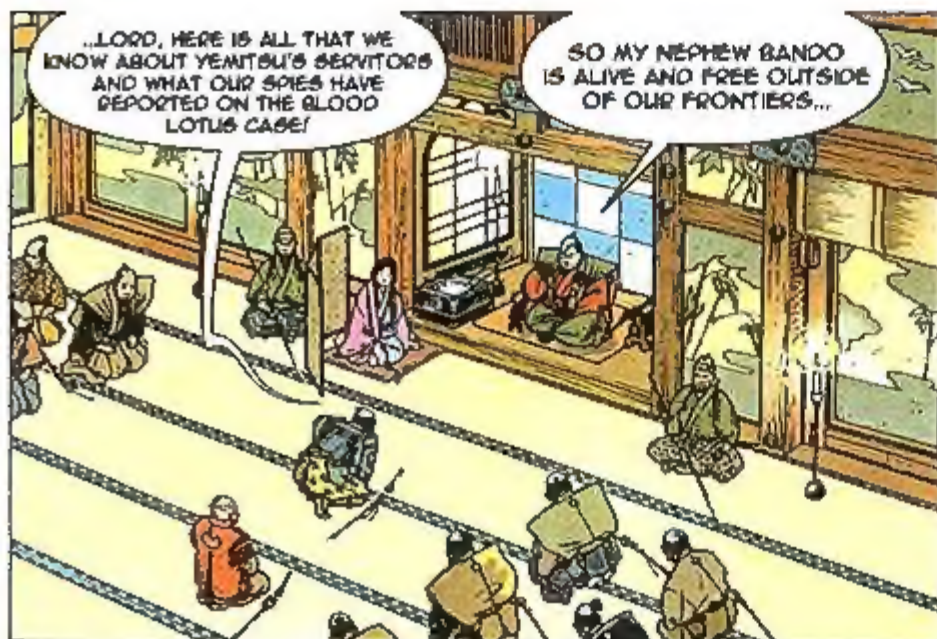
5. Welfare

KODJUTSU

THE 4TH TECHNIQUE

illustration : *Shigeo Fukuda*
drawing : *Shigeo*





...LORD, HERE IS ALL THAT WE KNOW ABOUT YEATSU'S SERVANTS AND WHAT OUR SPIES HAVE REPORTED ON THE BLOOD LOTUS CASE!

SO MY NEPHEW BANDO IS ALIVE AND FREE OUTSIDE OF OUR FRONTIERS...



ALAS MY LORD... WE CHASED THEM UP TO AMATERTSU'S DOOR BUT THEY ESCAPED AND...

ENOUGH! YOU'RE USELESS!

BANDO IS ALIVE AND FREE!
ALIVE AND FREE!



I... NO! LEAVE ME ALONE!
WON'T I EVER BE FREE FROM
OF THIS NIGHTMARE?

?!?

!?

HUM! SIRE MITSURU SEEMS REALLY ILL, NE? IT WOULD BE MORE SUITABLE IF HE WERE IN GOOD ENOUGH HEALTH TO WELCOME FATHER ORTEGA AT THE FRONTIER. MY MASTER, THE SHOGUN, WOULD BE VERY DISPLEASED IF HE DIDN'T GO, MATSUMOTO-SAN!



AND I HOPE SIR MITSURU STILL REMEMBERS THE PROMISES HE MADE TO MY MASTER.
HA! UMPP...



I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU...
THE HOSO-I LORD DOES
NOT FORGET HIS WORD,
MURASHIGE-SAN!



MURASHIGE-SAN!
ARE YOU LISTENING
TO ME?



...THEN HE WILL MARRY LADY ISHI TO BECOME HIS NEPHEW AND ALLY.



SIR MITSURU HOPES THAT, ONCE HE BECOMES CHRISTIAN THE SHOGUN AND THE BARBARIANS FROM THE SOUTH WILL REMEMBER THEIR WORDS AND DELIVER THE RIFLES AS PROMISED!



OF COURSE... I UNDERSTAND! THERE'S NOTHING ENVIABLE IN MARRYING A MAN SUCH AS SIR MITSURU... ALAS, IT IS THE BURDEN OF THE GREATS TO BEND TO THE WILL OF HISTORY, NE?



THERE ARE TIMES... THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I'D RATHER BE THE POOREST FARMER! THEN I WOULD NOT FEEL ASHAMED, WHEN I LOOK AT MYSELF IN A MIRROR!



DURING THAT TIME, THE HOSO-I LORD TOOK REFUGE IN HIS BEDROOM.

**I WILL HAVE TO TELL HIM...
I'M NOT BAD, AFTER ALL!
IF MOTHER WAS STILL HERE,
SHE WOULD TELL HIM...**



**I AM HERE,
MITSURU-SAN!**



**MOTHER! ...YOU CAME BACK. MOOO,
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! YOU TOO FATHER!
YOU ARE BACK AMONGST THE LIVING!
MOOO...**

**MOTHER, IT IS TRUE I'VE HAD MY BROTHER
YOSHIDA ASSASSINATED! ...BUT YOU WILL TALK WITH
BANDO... HE HAS TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE
ONLY THING I WANTED WHEN I KILLED HIS
FATHER WAS TO RELIEVE YOUR ESTATE!**

**I... I SWEAR I DIDN'T WANT HIM DEAD,
FATHER. I SWEAAAA! I ONLY WANTED...
OUR ESTATE BACK!**

**...IN THESE KIND OF AFFAIRS, MY SON,
YOU HAVE TO KILL EVERYBODY.
FROM THE LEADER OF THE CLAN TO
THE SMALLEST SAMURAI! IF YOU DON'T,
YOU WILL BE FACING TROUBLE.**



**LOOK AT HIM, ROJIN!
HE IS THE SAME AS WHEN
HE WAS LITTLE, WHEN
HIS BROTHER BULLIED HIM...**



**COME ON, MY SON.
YOU'RE A BIG BOY NOW!
AT YOUR AGE, THERE'S SOMETHING
YOU SHOULD KNOW...**



IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE FOR YOU TO NOTICE THAT YOUR BROTHER'S SON IS ALIVE AND THAT HE'S GOING TO COME WITH HIS ARMY AND HAVE YOU PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID

HAAAAA!
NO! NO!!



HE... HE ALIEN'T COME BACK!
HHH... HHFF... NO! NOT WITH
AN ARMY! HH... YOU HAVE TO
CHANGE THAT!

L... LORD... LORD!
PLEASE STOP!
HHH... HHIM...

MITSURU-SAN! THE RICE THAT SPROUTS TODAY
IS THE ONE THAT WAS PLANTED YESTERDAY!
IT IS THEREFORE NOT SURPRISING THAT THE
BLADE YOU PLANTED IN YOUR BROTHER'S HEART
HAS SPROUTED LIKE A TREE OF HATE.
NOW IT IS DARKENING THE FUTURE...

DO... DON'T LEAVE!
NOT NOW!

HHFF... HH... AT LEAST...
GIVE ME A SIGN... HHHH... HH...
FOR THE FUTURE!

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT
TO KNOW THE FUTURE?
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO?

I... HHH... A SIGN,
FATHER... GIVE ME
JUST A SIGN!



YOU BETRAYED ME... RHAAAAA!
I... I CURSE YOU!!!





INSIDE A HOUSE LOST IN THE STORM, A DIFFERENT KIND OF TEMPEST IS TAKING PLACE...



I AGREE WITH YOU, MISHITO-SAN, THE MISSION OUR MASTER ENTRUSTED WITH US IS MORE IMPORTANT... BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE IS THERE BETWEEN TAKING THE ROAD BY THE RIDGES OR SHIKAKU LAKE?



YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO SIR YEMITSU'S VILLAGE, NEH? I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS, KOBADATSU-SAN. HOWEVER, THE NINJA SAYS THE PATH BY THE LAKE IS WAY TOO DANGEROUS! WE MIGHT COME ACROSS MITSURU'S MEN.



THE NINJA SAYS... THE NINJA SAYS... WHATEVER A NINJA SAYS! AREN'T THOSE KILLERS KNOWN FOR THEIR PERFIPOUSNESS AND LACK OF LOYALTY?



IT IS NOT UP TO ME TO JUDGE SIR RANDO'S ACTIONS BUT WHAT WAS HE THINKING ABOUT WHEN HE HAD THIS KILLER GO WITH US? IS HE PUTTING MORE TRUST IN A MERCENARY THAN INTO HIS OWN SAMURAIS?



I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR INSULTS NINJA! IF I WASN'T BOUND BY MY MISSION, I'D HAVE CUT YOUR HEAD OFF A LONG TIME AGO!



YOUR PRESENCE IS LIKE THESE COWARDS' WEAPONS OUR MASTER FORCED ME TO WEAR... UNBEARABLE AND DEGRADING!

KOGARATSU-SAN, OUR MASTER
JUST WANTED US TO HAVE MORE
CARDS UP OUR SLEEVES... TO FIND
THAT MAN THAT MUST LEAD US TO
TO THE COAST, NEAR THE VILLAGE
OF ABUTA.

I KNOW THAT, MISHIM-
OTO-SAN, BUT THIS...
NINJA DOGS WANTING TO
COMMAND US... IT'S MORE
THAN I CAN BEAR!

KOGARATSU-SAN!
KOGARATSU-SAN!
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?



ALL NIGHT LONG, KOGARATSU AND NISHITO STRUGGLE AGAINST THE STORM, BY DAWN, THEY ARE APPROACHING
SIR YEMITSU'S ESTATE...



LOOK, NISHITO-SAN,
SHIKATSU LAKE! WE'RE
CLOSE TO IT NOW...

YOU'RE RIGHT, KOGARATSU-SAN! BUT
WE CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER! OUR
HORSES ARE FROZEN!



THEY WERE TOO VISIBLE
ANYWAY, BETTER SET RID OF
THEM...

WE WILL LEAVE THEM WITH A PEASANT
FROM THE YASHIKI! THERE MUST STILL BE
SOME PEOPLE LIVING THERE, NE?



HUM... LOOK.
THERE'S BEEN A
BATTLE HERE.

MY MASTER IS SAID TO HAVE DIED ON
THIS BRIDGE WHILE HE WAS COVERING
OUR ESCAPE! I HOPE SOMEONE FROM
THE VILLAGE WILL BE ABLE TO TELL US
WHAT REALLY HAPPENED!

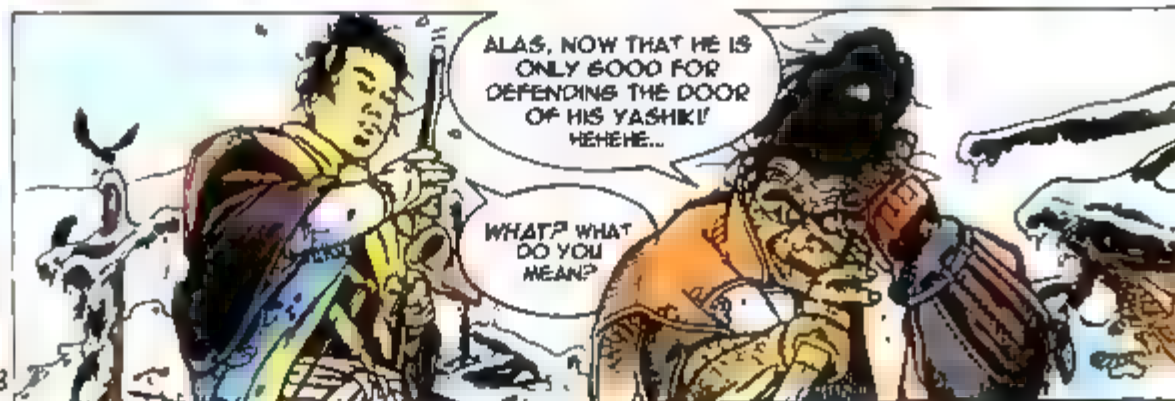
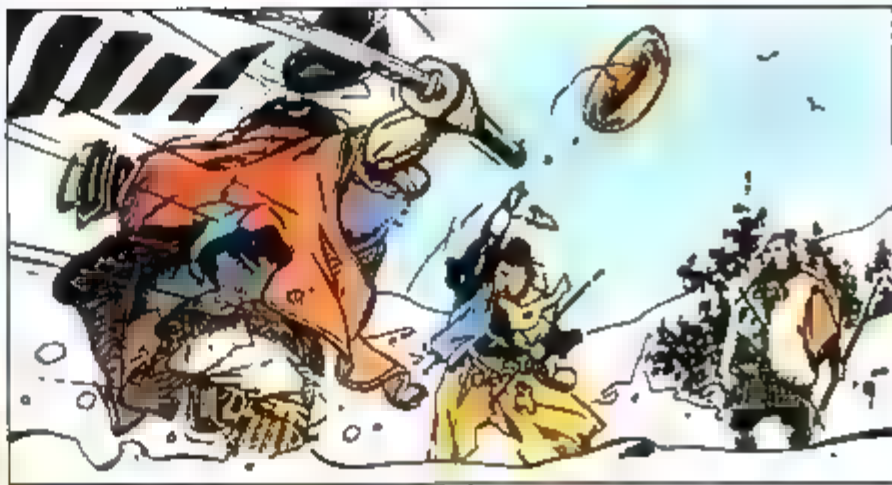
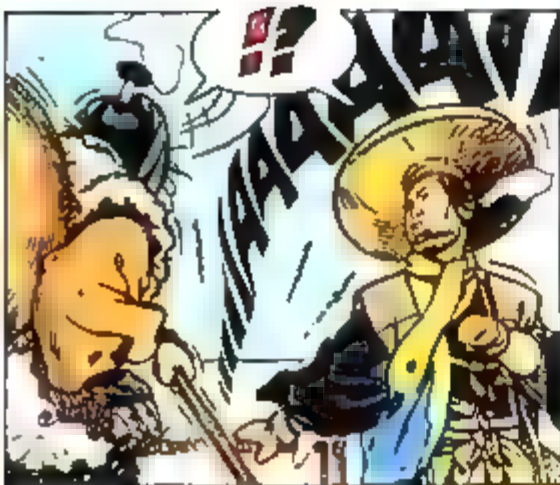


HMM...



I AM AFRAID, KOGARATSU-SAN, THAT THOSE
WHO STAYED HERE WON'T
BE ABLE TO TELL US
ANYTHING...

WHEEK!



HEY! I RECOGNIZE HIM, HE'S HAKUSHI THE DWARF! HE'S A WOODCUTTER FROM THE MOUNTAIN!

HAR! HAR! HAR! HAR! HAR!

KOBARATSU-SAN! I THOUGHT YOU WERE THAT DOG MITSURU'S MEN! FORGIVE MY STUPIDITY, BUT EVER SINCE THEY BURNT DOWN THE VILLAGE, THEIR PATROLS HAVE INCREASED IN THE VALLEY... HEHE...

AND YOU, HAKUSHI, FAITHFUL TO OUR LATE LORD, SIR YOSHIDA, YOU ATTACK ISOLATED PEOPLE! IS IT BY FAITH AND COURAGE OR IS IT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO KILL AND STEAL FROM PEOPLE?

HEHE... ONE MUST LIVE, LORD AND NOBODY PROTECTS THE SURVIVORS WHO TOOK REFUGE IN THE MOUNTAIN ANYMORE HA, IF ONLY SIR YEMATSU WAS STILL HERE TO GUIDE US! HEHE...

ALAS, NOW THAT HE IS ONLY GOOD FOR DEFENDING THE DOOR OF HIS YASHIKI! HEHEHE...

WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

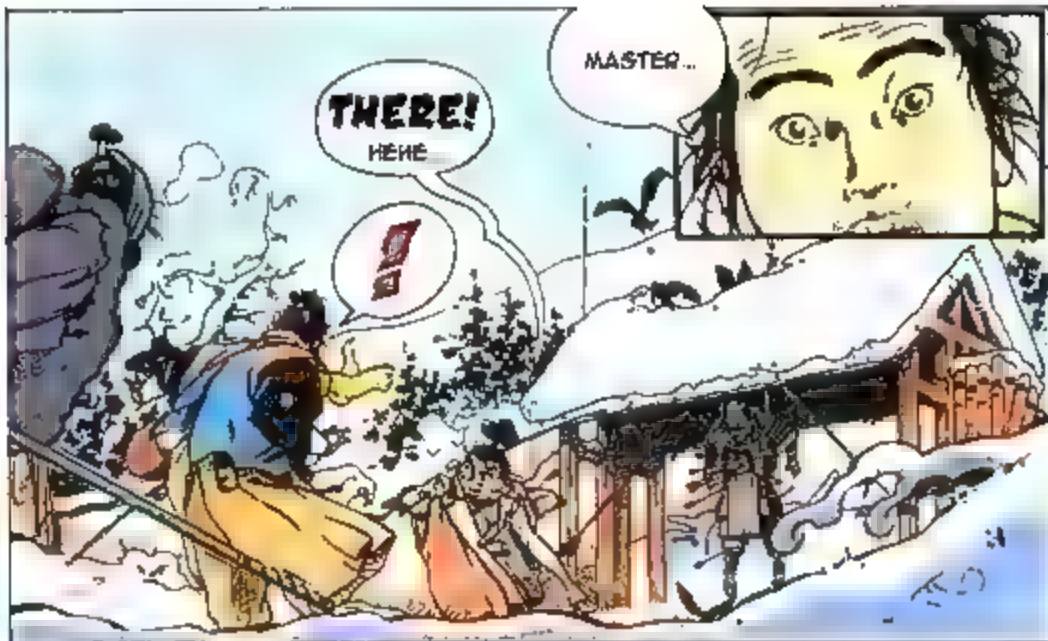
...COME MY LORD! COME, HEHE...
COME! YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.
HEHEHE!



MASTER...

THERE!

HEHE



MASTER!

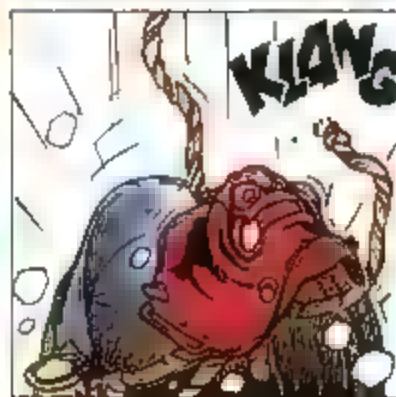
MISHITO-SAN!
HAKUSHI! HELP ME!
YOU CAN'T JUST
LEAVE HIM LIKE THAT!
..MY POOR MASTER..



AND...
BUT?

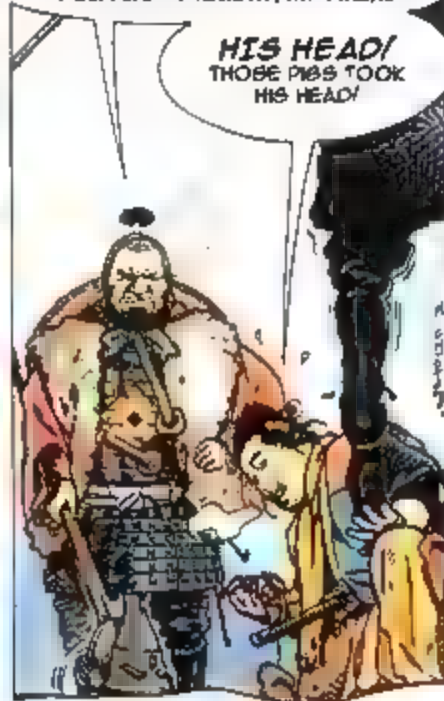


KIAA



I'M AFRAID THE INSULT DONE TO YOUR
MASTER IS MUCH MORE SERIOUS THAN
YOU FIRST THOUGHT, MY FRIEND!

HIS HEAD!
THOSE PIGS TOOK
HIS HEAD!

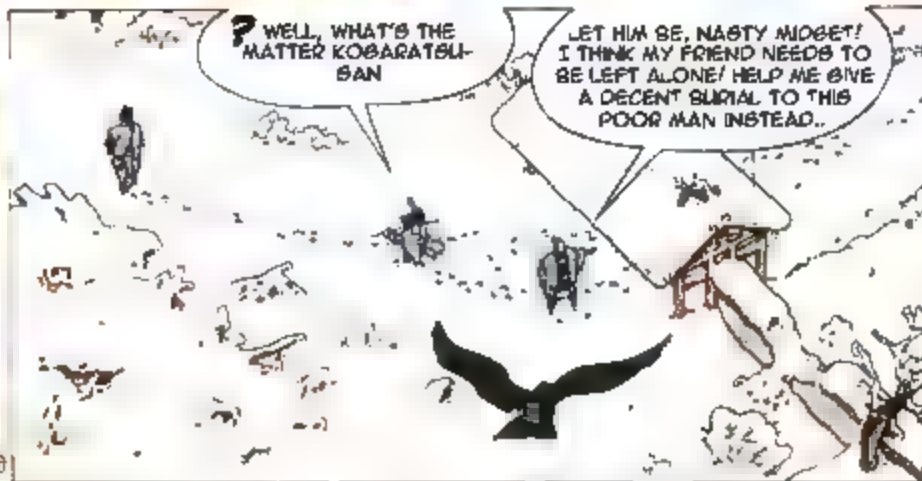


HEHE! IT'S THE CHIEF OF MITSURU'S SAMU-
RAIS, SIR MATSUYAMA, WHO BEHEADED HIM!
HE TOOK THE HEAD AS AN OFFERING
TO HIS MASTER!

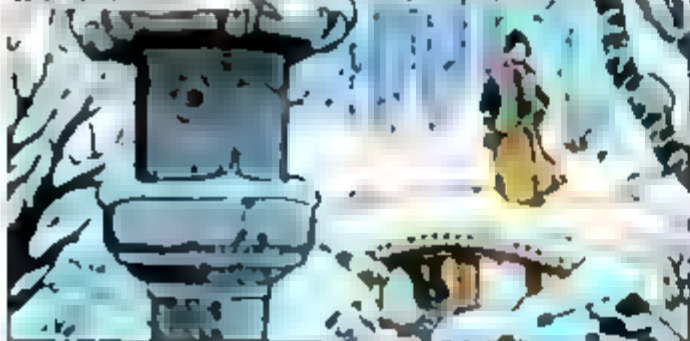


? WELL, WHAT'S THE
MATTER KOBARATSU-
SAN

LET HIM BE, NASTY MIDGET!
I THINK MY FRIEND NEEDS TO
BE LEFT ALONE! HELP ME GIVE
A DECENT BURIAL TO THIS
POOR MAN INSTEAD..



THE YOSHIOKAWA-SAN NEEDS SOME SOLITUDE TO THINK
AND BY HIS MIND



HE SEES HIMSELF RIDING WITH HISOTO, BEHIND THEIR LORD
KISHIJI BANDO, WHILE FAR BEHIND THEM, IN THE VALLEY, YENITOU
WAS DYING TO COVER THEIR RETREAT



BUT HIS DUTY WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING ELSE. TO PROTECT HIS PEOPLE UNTIL THE BANDO HAD TO FIND SOMETHING WITH SOME SMALL NUMBER
OF TOWN LIVES. THE ONLY ONE WHOSE FATHER'S MIND WAS



WHO IS
COMING?
DON'T MOVE
ANY CLOSER!

RUN AND TELL YOUR MASTERS
THAT LORD KISHIJI BANDO HAS
MENDAKA IS HERE. WAITING FOR
YOUR HOSTILITY!

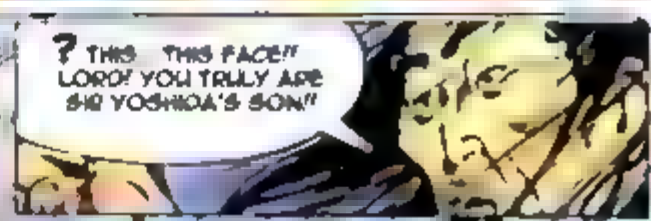


WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
SHO YOSHIOKA'S SON IS
DEAD!



DO I LOOK LIKE I AM
DEAD, SENSO-SAN?

OH!



? THIS THIS FACE!!
LORD! YOU TRULY ARE
SHO YOSHIOKA'S SON!!



SINCE YOU RECOGNIZE IN
ME THE BLOOD OF YOUR
LATE MASTER NOW YOU
HAVE TO OBEY ME, NE?



YOU WILL IMMEDIATELY GATHER ALL MY
FATHER'S SAMURAI WHO TOOK REFUGE IN
THE MOUNTAINS. I WANT THEM HERE
BEFORE THE NIGHT!

FOR A LONG TIME, THEY WAITED INSIDE SHARA BENSU'S HOUSE THE LORD OF THE VILLAGE, WITHOUT SIR BANDO UTTERING A WORD..



LORD... I DON'T UNDERSTAND THANKS TO WHAT MIRACLE ARE YOU HERE, TONIGHT?

BENSU-SAN, SIR BANDO WILL ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS WHEN THE OTHER LORDS OF THE MOUNTAINS ARE HERE.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT ANY LONGER, BENSU-SAN! HERE WE ARE! ...WHERE IS THE ONE PRETENDING TO BE OUR MASTER'S SON?

KAKEI-SAN! IF I WEREN'T IMPUTING YOUR INSULTING BEHAVIOUR TO INCREDULITY, I WOULD ALREADY HAVE CUT YOUR HEAD OFF!!



BY AMOA... HE REALLY IS YOSHIDA'S SON!

INDEED, WHEN MY MURDEROUS UNCLE, SIR MITSURU, TOOK THE POWER IN OUR PROVINCE, YOU DECIDED THAT YOUR PREFERRED TO HIDE IN THESE MOUNTAINS INSTEAD OF SWEARING ALLEGIANCE TO HIM HONEST TO THE SPIRIT OF MY FATHER! BUT YOU HAVE ALSO BEEN KEPT AWAY FROM THE COURT OF ISHIKARI FOR TOO LONG. YOU, WHO USED TO BE SAMURAI HAVE TURNED INTO PEASANTS OR THIEVES!



BUT FEAR NOT.. EVERYTHING WILL TURN BACK AS IT WAS! WHEN, WITH A POWERFUL ARMY, WE REMOVE THAT MITSURU TRAITOR FROM THE KISHUJI THRONE, YOU WILL ONCE AGAIN RECEIVE THE HONOURS DUE TO YOUR RANK!

ATTACK THE ISHIKARI SHIRO? YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS MY LORD?



LORD BANDO! DO NOT DOUBT THE FACT THAT OUR LIVES BELONG TO YOU! BUT WE ARE POOR AND OUR BUSHIS ARE POORLY EQUIPPED AND LACK TRAINING. TO GO TO WAR AGAINST MITSURU WOULD BE SUICIDE!



THERE IS NO NEED TO BE UNCERTAIN, FUJITA-SAN! MY FATHER, IN HIS GREAT BENEVOLENCE, BEQUEATHED ME A MAJOR TRUMP CARD TO WIN THIS WAR... AN INVULNERABLE TRUMP CARD!



THE ETA'S TREASURE!!



AS SOON AS OUR FIDEL SAMURAI'S HAVE REGAINED THEIR FORCES AND HEALED THEIR WOUNDS I WILL SEND THEM TO A SECRET SPOT ON THE COAST TO GET THIS TREASURE BACK WE WILL WAIT FOR THEM AND PREPARE OUR ATTACK PLANS



BUT BEFORE ANYTHING, KAKEI-SAN, TONIGHT I WILL COME WITH YOU TO YOUR VILLAGE. YOUR ARMOURERS ARE FAMOUS AND WITH THIS DANGEROUS MISSION, MY GUSHS WILL NEED THE BEST WEAPONS.



YOU WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED, MY LORD!

...YOU WILL WAIT FOR ME AT THE LOCAL INN! KOGARATSU-SAN. HAVE YOUR SHOULDER HEALED! AND DON'T DO ANYTHING STUPID DURING MY ABSENCE, WE ARE ON FRIENDLY TERRITORY!

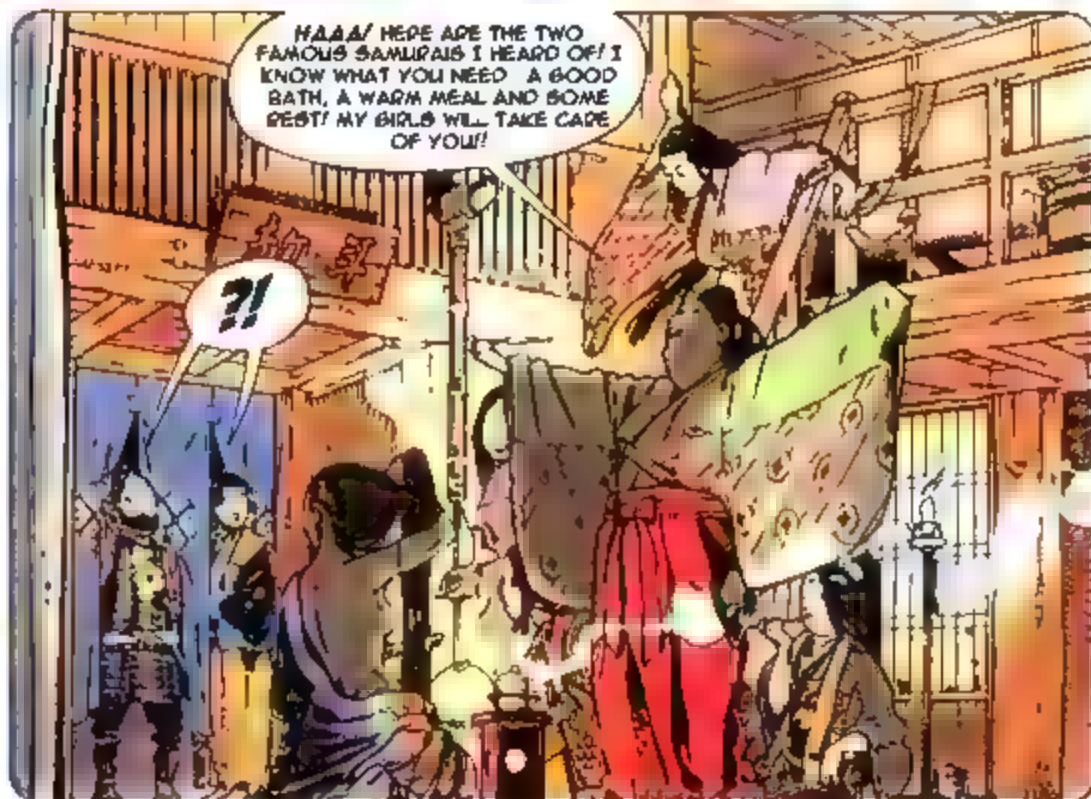


YES MY LORD!

IN THE TWILIGHT, THE TWO SAMURAI'S A BIT WORRIED WATCHED THEIR MASTER DEPART...



COME ON MY FRIEND, LET'S BOTH SEE WHAT THIS INN LOOKS LIKE! IT'S OWN LOOKS SO FRIENDLY!



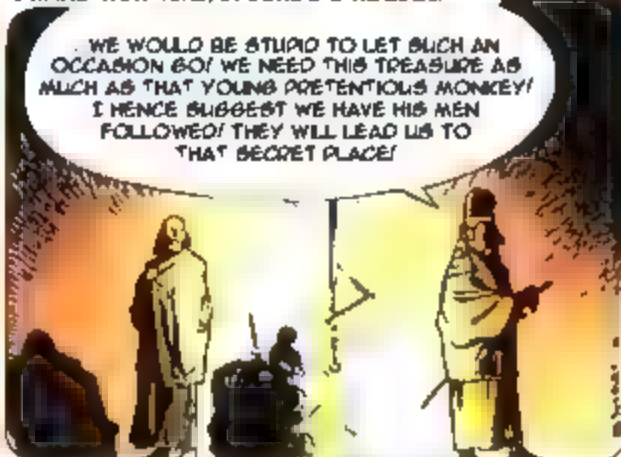
HAAA! HERE ARE THE TWO FAMOUS SAMURAI'S I HEARD OF! I KNOW WHAT YOU NEED A GOOD BATH, A WARM MEAL AND SOME REST! MY GIRLS WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU!

?!



BUT... LET SO OF ME! MISHIMOTO-SAN!! DO NOT ABANDON ME IN THE HANDS OF THOSE FURIES!

DURING THAT TIME, IN BENSUO'S HOUSE...



WE WOULD BE STUPID TO LET SUCH AN OCCASION GO! WE NEED THIS TREASURE AS MUCH AS THAT YOUNG PRETENTIOUS MONKEY! I HENCE SUGGEST WE HAVE HIS MEN FOLLOWED! THEY WILL LEAD US TO THAT SECRET PLACE!

A FEW DAYS LATER...

...YOUR CARE WAS WONDERFUL, ENJO, SOON MY SHOULDER WILL BE TOTALLY HEALED



...AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GO BACK TO FIGHTING, NE? HAAA! YOU'RE ALL THE SAME!

KOBARATSU-SAN! SIR BANDO IS BACK! COME QUICKLY!!



AFTER A SHORT MEAL...



KOBARATSU-SAN, WHILE YOU WERE OPENING AT PASSAGE FOR ME IN THE AMATERATSU DOOR, YOUR BLADE WAS BROKEN...

MY LORD! AT YOUR SERVICE, I WILL BREAK THE NOBLEST BLADE OF JAPAN IF NEEDED!



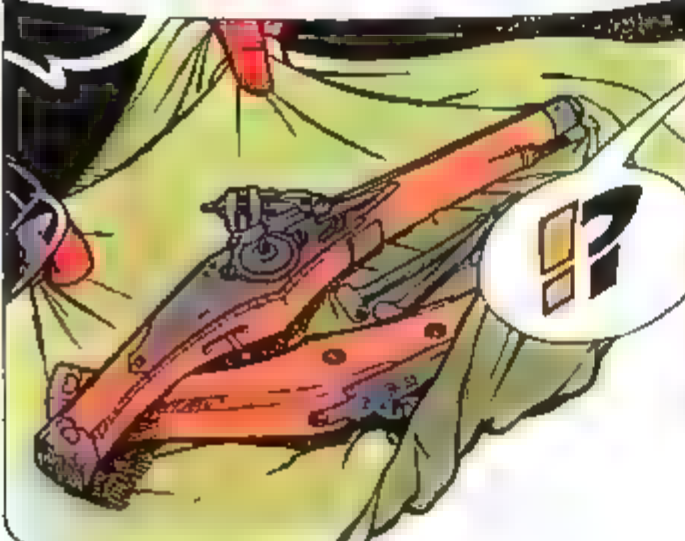
HE! HE! I'M NOT ASKING FOR THAT MUCH! BUT SINCE A SAMURAI CANNOT SERVE ME WITHOUT HIS WEAPONS, I HAD A NEW BLADE FORGED FOR YOU!

HO!! IT'S TOO MUCH OF AN HONOUR!! I WAS ONLY DOING MY DUTY!



DO NOT REJOICE YET! I HAVE OTHER PRESENTS FOR YOU, I AM AFRAID THEY WON'T PLEASE YOU AS MUCH AS THIS ONE...

...THESE GUNS ARE A RATHER PERFECTIONATE TYPE KAKE'S ARMOURERS COPIED THEM FROM THOSE USED BY THE SOUTH BARBARIANS. NO MORE FLUSE, ONCE LOADED, THEY'RE ALWAYS READY TO SHOOT



BUT SIRE BANDO TH... THESE WEAPONS ARE FOR COWARDS! ...AND THEY WILL NEVER BE WORTHY AS A GOOD BOW!



WHAT!? YOU'RE TALKING WITHOUT USING YOUR HEAD, SAMURAI!

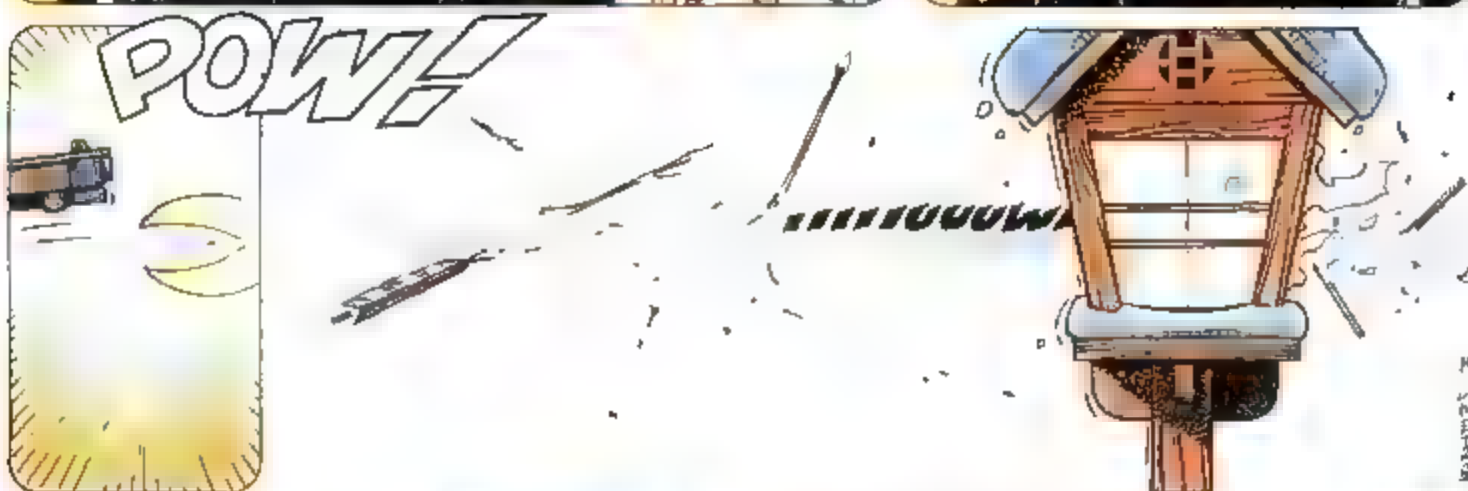


SHIKI, LEND HIM YOUR BOW, I CHALLENGE HIM!

WE'LL SEE WHICH OF THESE
TWO WEAPONS IS MORE
EFFICIENT!

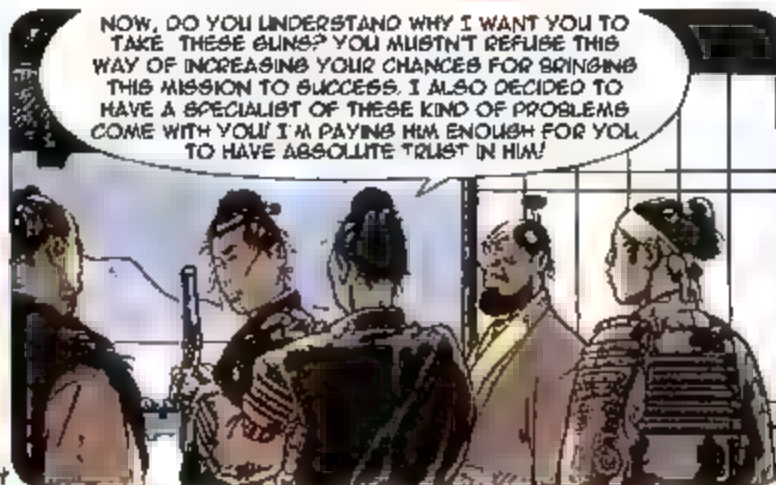
DO YOU SEE THAT LANTERN
OVER THERE? I BET YOU DON'T
HIT IT WITH AN ARROW

HUM... YOU KNOW, KAKEI-
SAN IT'S NOT A FEAT
TO HIT AT THIS DISTANCE
FOR AN ARCHER SUCH AS
KOSARATSU...



FASTER THAN THE
ARROW...

NOW, DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I WANT YOU TO
TAKE THESE GUNS? YOU MUSTN'T REFUSE THIS
WAY OF INCREASING YOUR CHANCES FOR BRINGING
THIS MISSION TO SUCCESS. I ALSO DECIDED TO
HAVE A SPECIALIST OF THESE KIND OF PROBLEMS
COME WITH YOU! I'M PAYING HIM ENOUGH FOR YOU
TO HAVE ABSOLUTE TRUST IN HIM!



THE NEXT MORNING, JUST AFTER THE SUN ROSE...

PEEBT! KOGARATSU!
WAKE UP! MEET ME IN THE
STABLES AS SOON AS YOU
CAN!

HAHA?

LATER...

HURRY UP! WE'RE LEAVING! SIR BANDO
SAVE ME ALL THE DETAILS CONCERNING
OUR MISSION. WE'LL SAIL THE SHIKO-
BUKO DOWN TO THE PORT OF ABUTA!
THE ONE WHO WILL LEAD US TO THE
"ETA'S TREASURE" IS CALLED SUNKU! HE
LIVES IN AN ETA VILLAGE WEST OF
ABUTA!

BY THE GODS!
HUSH!

...SOMEONE COULD HAVE HEARD YOU!
YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL ENOUGH! I DON'T
HAVE A GREAT TRUST IN THOSE MOUNTAIN
LORDS!

HAR! HAR! HAR! YOUR
NAIVETY SOMETIMES SUR-
PRISES ME! HOW CAN YOU
BELIEVE THAT SOMETHING
CAN STAY A SECRET IN
JAPAN?

KOGARATSU-SAN! KOGARATSU!
DON'T... DON'T LEAVE! TAKE ME WITH
YOU!!

SEE WHAT I MEAN?

I BEG YOU!

ENJO, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I... I
CAN'T! BUT I'LL COME BACK, I
PROMISE!!

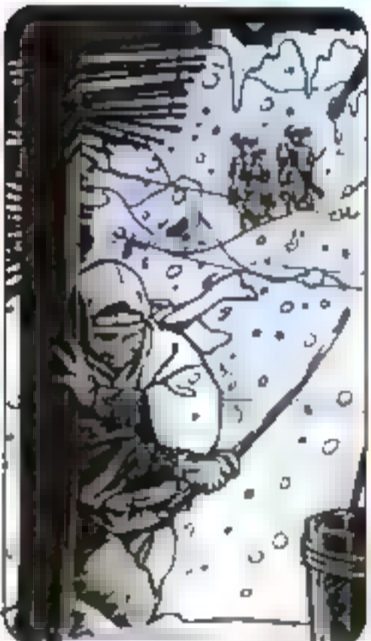
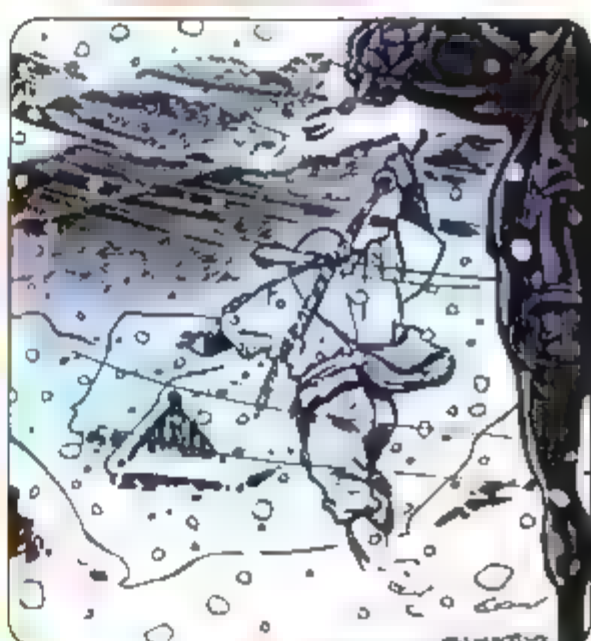
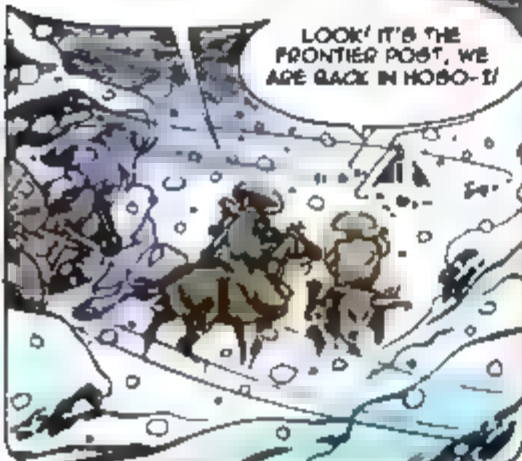
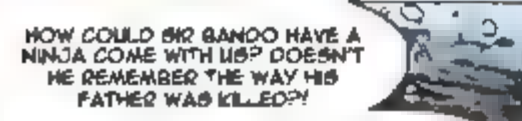
IF YOU DON'T
GET KILLED,
BEAUTIFUL
SAMURAI... IF
YOU DON'T GET
KILLED...

THERE! ...HERE IS THE MERCENARY HIRED BY SIR
BANDO TO HELP US ON OUR MISSION. HE'S RIGHT
WHERE HE WAS SUPPOSED TO WAIT FOR US.

A NINJA!!



RIDING WITH DIFFICULTY AGAINST THE HEAVY WIND, WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO SEE ANYTHING...



AFTER AN ARGUMENT WITH THE NINJA, KOGARATSU AND MISHITO HAVE REACH SHIKOTSU LAKE AND THE VILLAGE OF HIS FORMER MASTER, SIR YEMITSU.

HUM... KOGARATSU-SAN, WE HAVE TO GO NOW... IT WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING TO STAY HERE ANY LONGER AND WE RISK BEING CAUGHT BY A PATROL ANY MOMENT!

I CONVINCED HAKUSHI TO TAKE US TO THE RIDGE LEADING TO ABUTA. IN EXCHANGE, WE WILL LEAVE HIM OUR HORSES!

YOU ARE RIGHT, MISHITO-SAN. WE HAVE A MISSION TO ACCOMPLISH! I STILL HAVE ONE LAST THING TO DO BEFORE LEAVING THIS PLACE...

UPON THIS TOMB, I SWEAR TO KILL THAT DOG MATSUMOTO, AND TO PUT THE HEAD OF YEMITSU BACK ON HIS BODY SO HE CAN AT LAST REST IN PEACE!

COME! HEI! HEI! HEI! THE PATH LEADING TO THE RIDGE STARTS OVER THERE...

WELL, HAKUSHI, YOU'RE NOT HIDING THE HORSES? AREN'T YOU AFRAID SOMEONE MIGHT STEAL THEM?

HEI! HEI! HEI! ...SINCE THE MASTER'S DEATH, NOBODY DARES COME HERE! NOT EVEN MITSURU'S PATROLS. THEY'RE TOO AFRAID THAT THEY COULD MEET SIR YEMITSU'S GHOST! ONLY A FEW BODS SNEAK AROUND HERE! HEI! HEI! HEI!

...AT THE VILLAGE...

THERE'S NO DOUBT, FUJITA-SAN, IT'S THEIR HORSES!

MAY THE BOGS OF THE MOUNTAIN AND OF THE SEA FOLLOW AND WATCH OVER YOU, KOBARATSU-SAN!

LEAVE THE GODS OUT OF THIS, NASTY MIDGET!

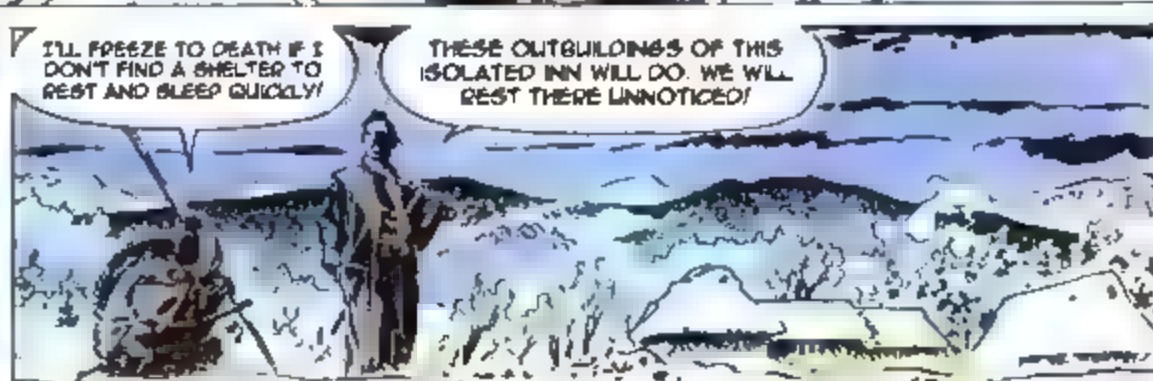
.. WE'RE ALREADY ENOUGH TO FOLLOW YOUR KOSARATSL!

A comic book illustration showing three men on horseback in a snowy, mountainous landscape. The man in the center is on a white horse, wearing a dark cap and a long, light-colored robe with a fur collar. He is looking forward with a determined expression. To his left is a man on a brown horse, wearing a yellow and black patterned robe. To his right is a man on a brown horse, wearing a green and black patterned robe. A speech bubble from the central figure reads: "WE'RE ALREADY ENOUGH TO FOLLOW YOUR KOSARATSL!". The background features stylized, jagged mountain peaks under a pale sky.

HE! HE! HE!

DID YOU HEARD...
THAT CRY...

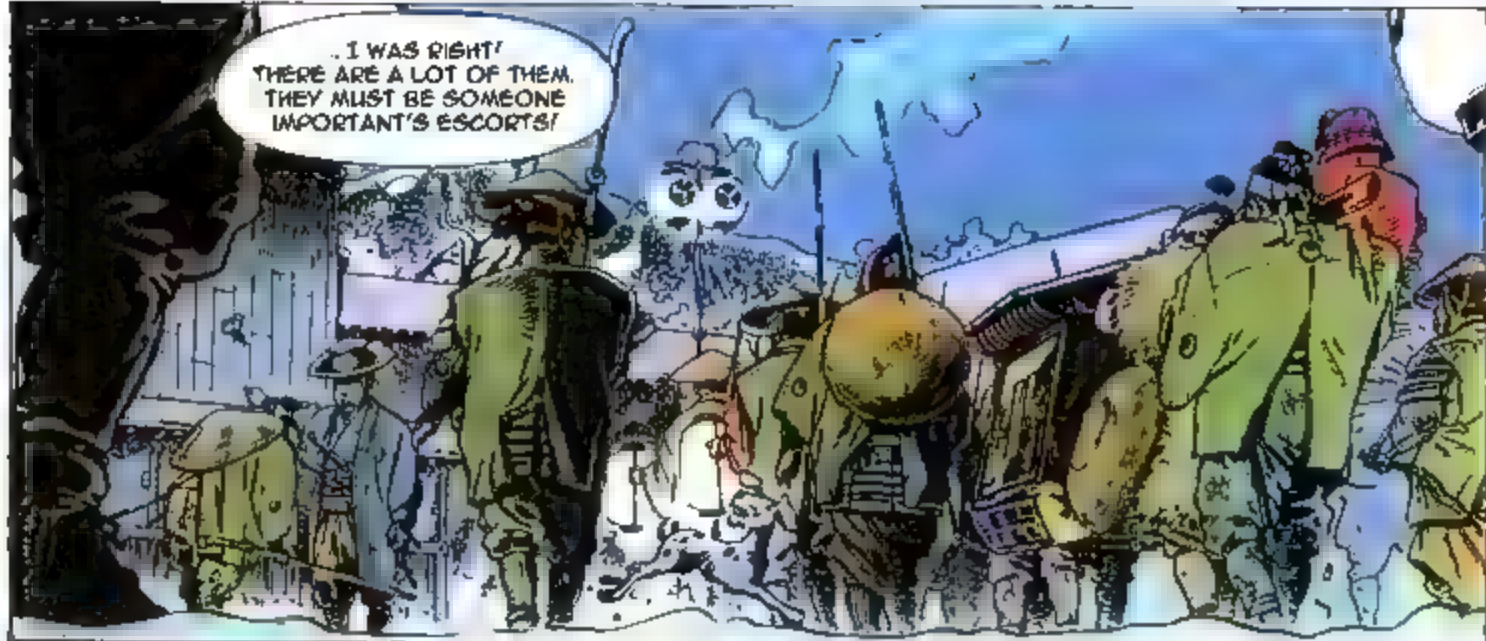
WITH THE NIGHT, CAME THE HARSH COLD WIND, SHARP AS A BLADE BUT MISHITO AND KOBARATSU'S TRIP IS COMING TO AN END



WITHOUT DISTURBING ANYBODY, KOBARATSU AND MISHITO SWEPT INSIDE THE BUILDING



.. I WAS RIGHT!
THERE ARE A LOT OF THEM.
THEY MUST BE SOMEONE
IMPORTANT'S ESCORTS!



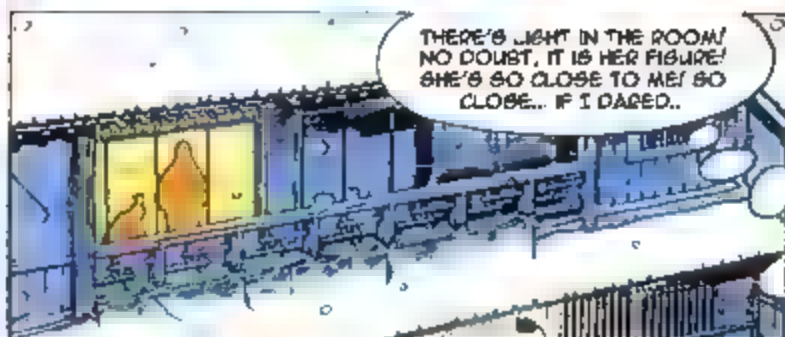
BY BENKEI'S
BLOOD! I... I'M
DREAMING!
PRINCESS ISHI,
HERE, IN ABUTA!



I NEVER DARED TO EXPECT
SEEING HER AGAIN! MAY
BOUDDHA BE BLESSED!



THERE'S LIGHT IN THE ROOM!
NO DOUBT, IT IS HER FIGURE!
SHE'S SO CLOSE TO ME! SO
CLOSE... IF I DARED..



I I SHOULDN'T...
MY MISSION...



THE HELL WITH IT! I WANT TO
LIVE FOR MYSELF! BE IT ONLY
FOR ONE NIGHT! EVEN IF I
HAVE TO DIE AFTERWARDS!



THEY'RE SETTING UP GUARD FOR THE
NIGHT! PERFECT! THEY'LL BE TOO BUSY
TO MAKING A FIRE TO EVEN THINK
ABOUT WATCHING THE ROOFS..





...I MUSTN'T SLIDE...



MUST... NOT... SLI...



OUCH, OUCH, OUCH...

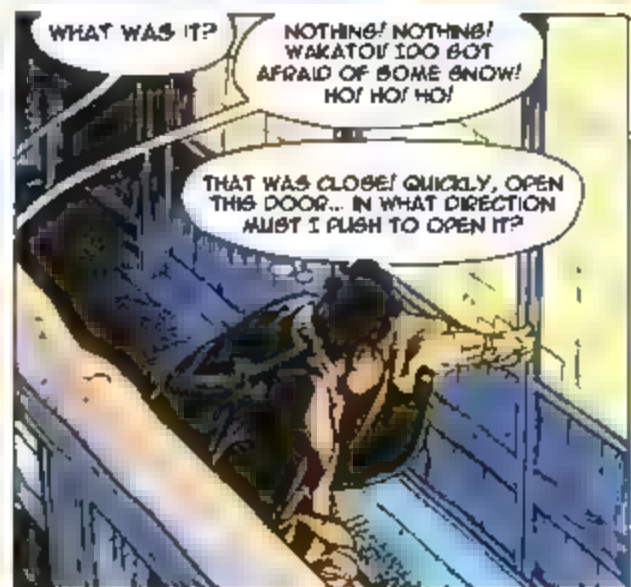


WHAT... ARSH! ARH... HELP!!



WHAAAA... HA! HA! HA! IT'S ONLY SOME SNOW IDO! HA! HA! HA!

...DAMN SNOW!



WHAT WAS IT?

NOTHING! NOTHING! WAKATOU IDO GOT AFRAID OF SOME SNOW! HO! HO! HO!

THAT WAS CLOSE! QUICKLY, OPEN THIS DOOR... IN WHAT DIRECTION MUST I PUSH TO OPEN IT?



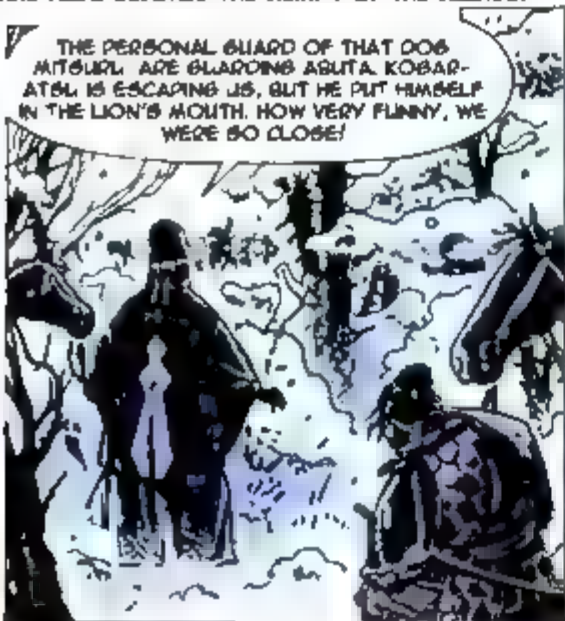
??



OH!... KOGARATSU ??



AT THE SAME TIME FLAKA, WITH ONE OF HIS BUSHIS, HAS ALSO REACHED THE VICINITY OF THE VILLAGE.



THE PERSONAL GUARD OF THAT DOG MITSURU ARE BLAZING ABOUT A KOBAR-ATSU IS ESCAPING US, BUT HE PUT HIMSELF IN THE LION'S MOUTH. HOW VERY FUNNY, WE WERE SO CLOSE!

THE DWARF THAT KILLED MY BROTHER AND INJURED ME CAST A SPELL ON US! WE'D BETTER GIVE UP! WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING NOW!



GIVE UP? ...NOT YET!

...NO! WE'RE NOT GIVING UP AT ALL! FOLLOW ME!



BUT.. MITSURU'S SAMURAI ARE OUR ENEMIES!! IT'S VERY DANGEROUS!

WHO'S THERE?



FRIENDS! TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER, RIGHT NOW! I MUST TALK TO HIM ABOUT A VERY IMPORTANT AFFAIR!

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S GOING ON?



STRANGERS, MATSUMOTO-SAN! THEY SAY THEY OWN INFORMATION THAT WILL INTEREST YOU!



IT'S HIM, MY LORD!

WHAT YOU HAVE TO TELL ME SHOULD BE INTERESTING.. THAT LONG WALK IN THE COLD IRRITATED ME CUTTING YOUR HEAD OFF MIGHT RELAX ME A BIT.



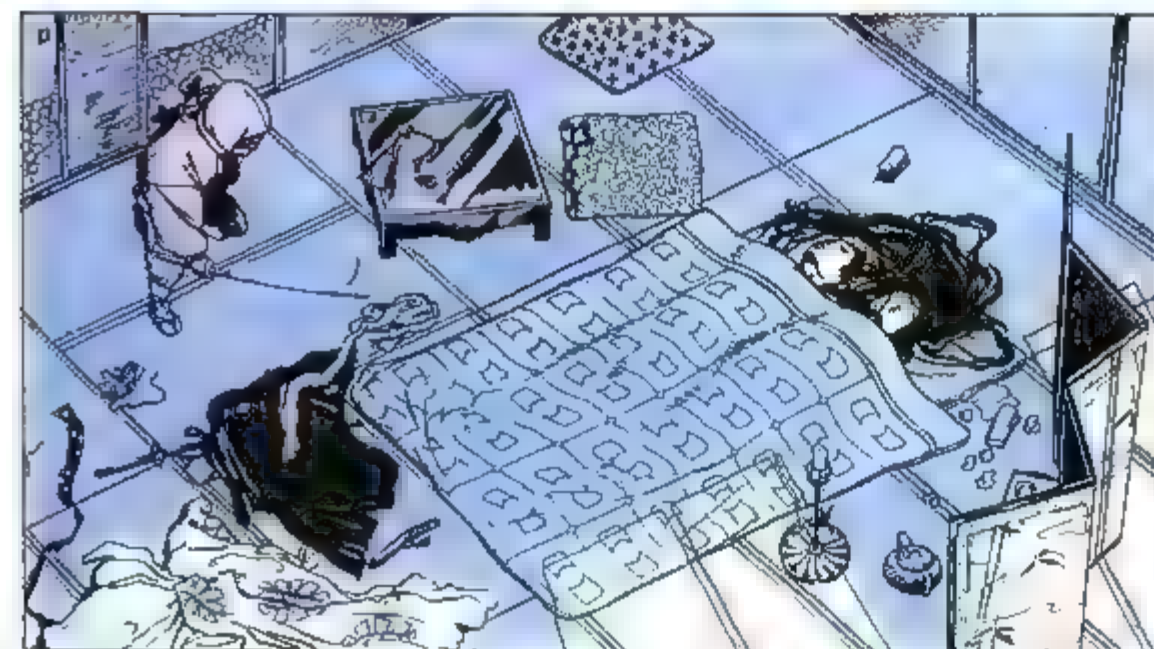
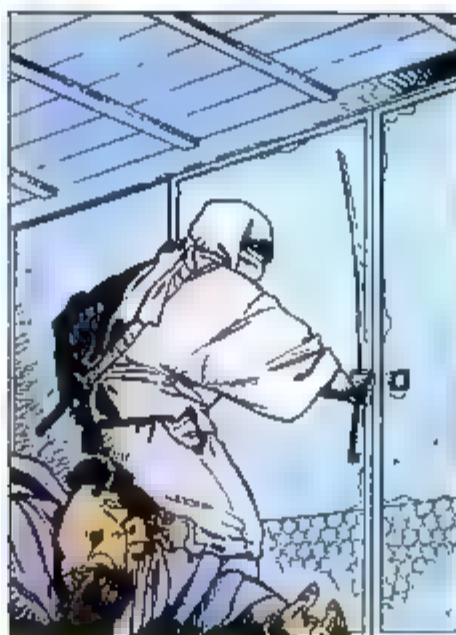
WOULD I BE INTERESTING ENOUGH MY LORD, IF I TALKED ABOUT A TREASURE? ..A WONDERFUL TREASURE .. WITHIN YOUR GRASP!

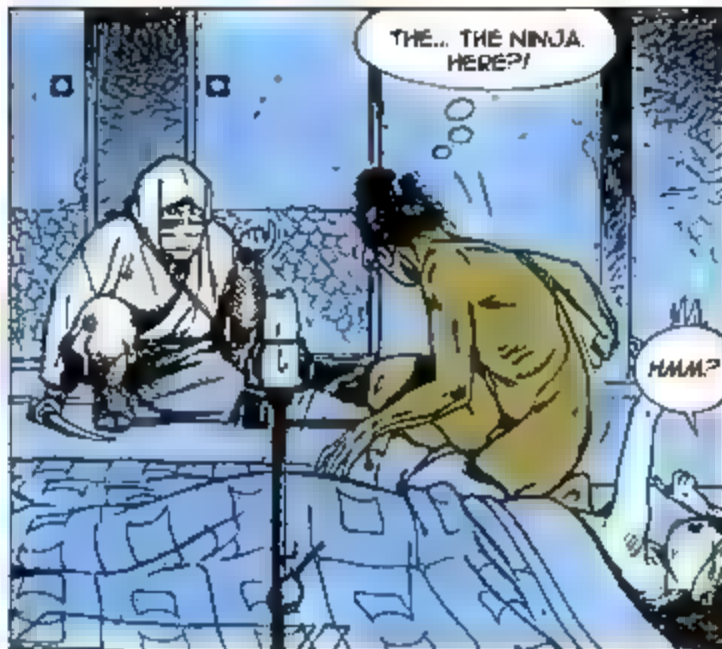
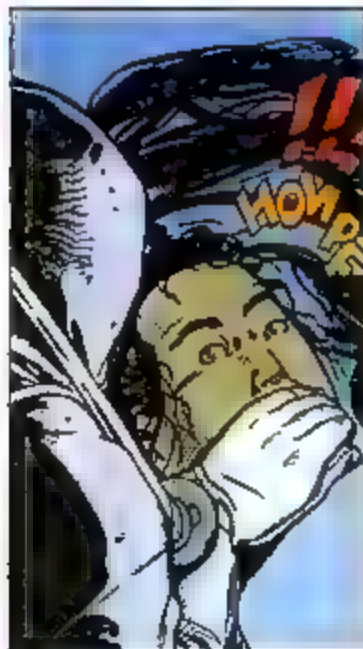


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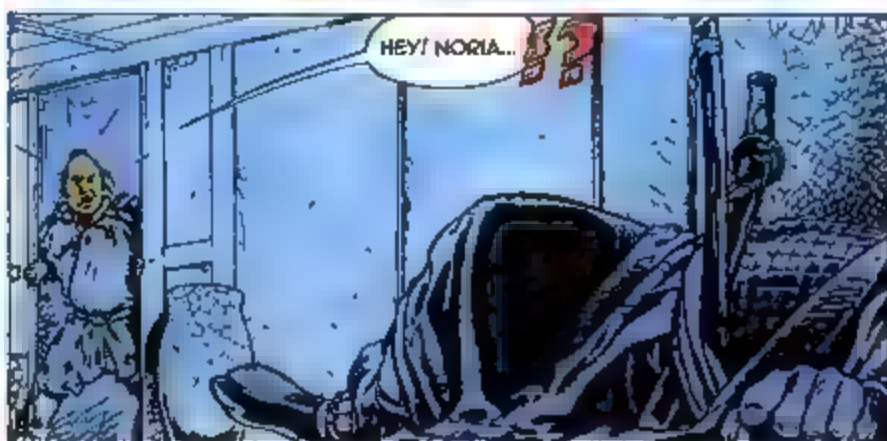
THIS CASUAL SCENE HAS A MYSTERIOUS SPECTATOR.

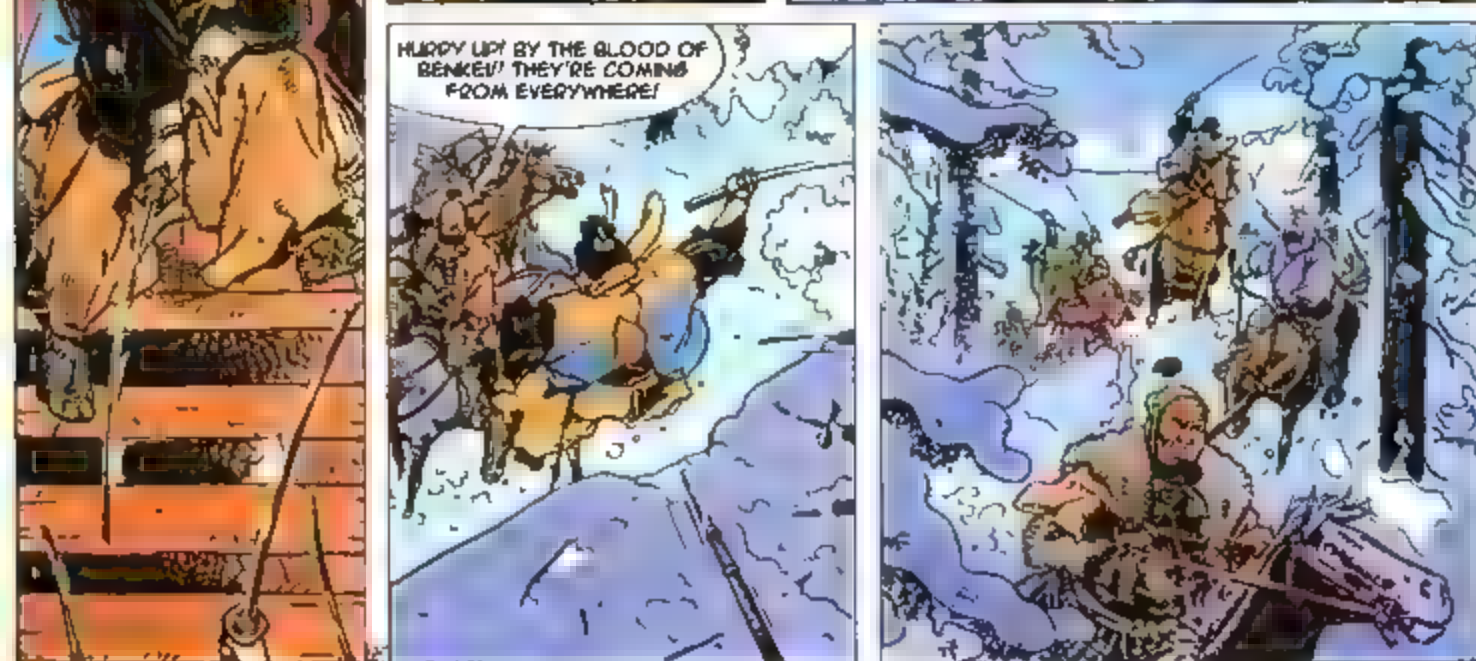
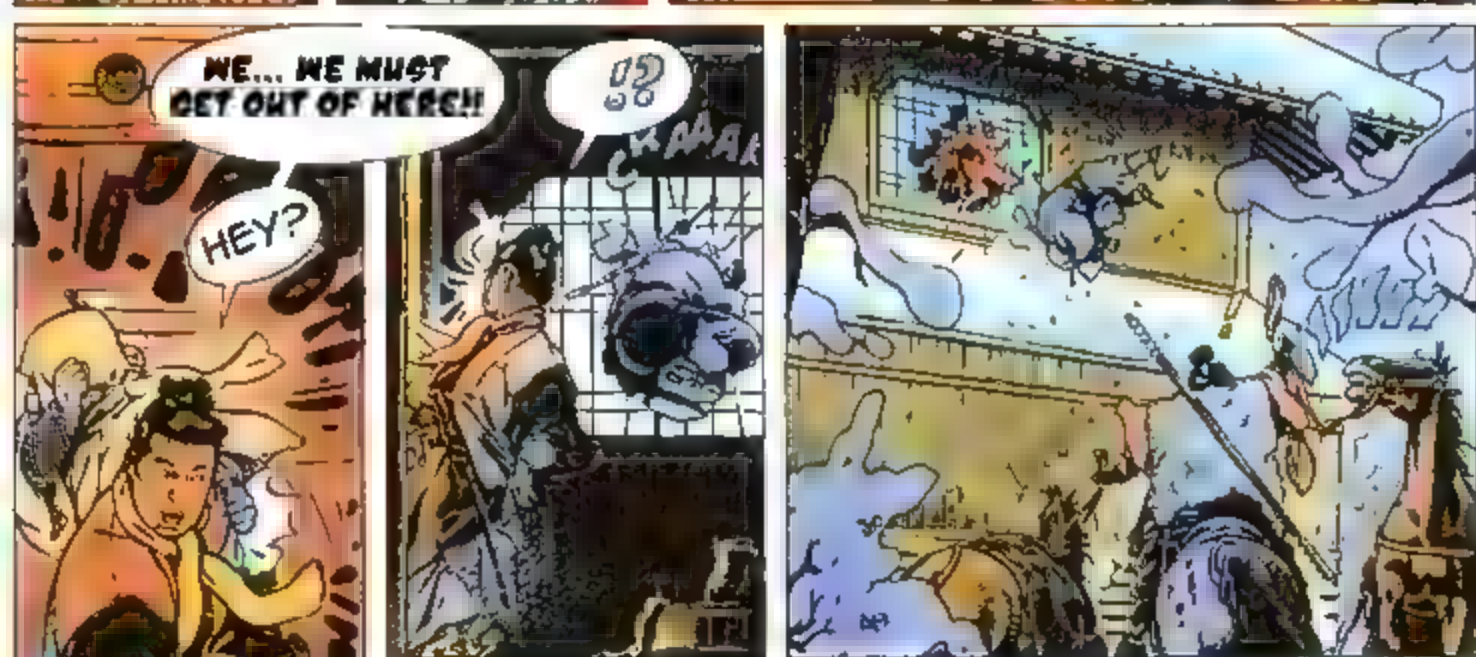
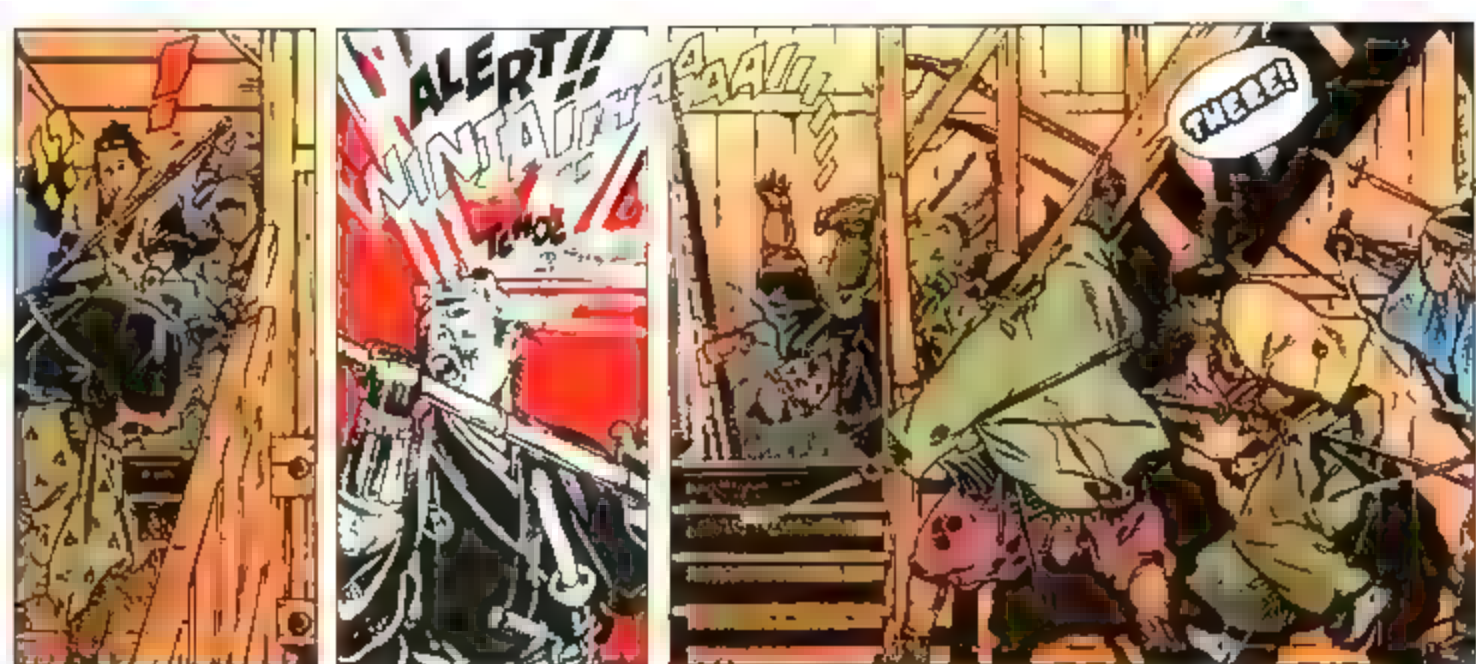
THE PALE LIGHT OF DAWN RISES ON ABUTA.
IT IS THE TIME WHEN THE TIRED GUARDS
DROP THEIR ATTENTION...





IN THE NEXT ROOM





WISHITO-SAN! WILL YOU EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT'S GOING ON?!

THE NINJA CAME TO ME DURING THE NIGHT! IF NOT FOR HIM, WE'D HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY MITSURU ALREADY! WE'VE BEEN BETRAYED!

BOES, LED BY THE SMELL OF GOLD, FOLLOWED US SINCE WE LEFT BENGO'S PLACE IN THE MOUNTAINS! WHEN THEY SAW THAT WE WERE GETTING AWAY FROM THEM, THEY SOLD US OUT TO THAT DOB RAT SUMOTO WHO MEN ARE ALREADY GUARDING ALL THE ROADS...

I MISJUDGED THAT NINJA! HE MIGHT BE A MOCCHENADY BUT HE'S HONEST! WITHOUT HIM, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN DOOMED!

UNLESS HE'S EVEN MORE CUNNING THAN HIS RYALS AND HAS DECIDED TO HELP US UNTIL WE REACH THE TREASURE AND BETRAY US AFTERWARDS...

BY ANIPA-BUPPAH!!

YOSHIDA!!!

KILL!!
KILL!!

I MUST SILENCE THAT MONKEY! NOW IS THE MOMENT TO USE THIS FASTER THAN THE ARROW!

BLOCK THEM! THEY... THEY'RE THE REBELS!!

OAHN HODDE!
HOOO! HOOOOO!!



AT THAT SAME MOMENT, NOT FAR FROM THE SCENE...



WHILE THE WINTER SUN SLOWLY RISES ABOVE THE SEA, THE SAILORS OF ABUTA BEHELD A SINGLE SPECTACLE

I HEARD IT'S KISHIJI MITSURU HIMSELF WITH ALL HIS COURT!

EVEN HEARD 'T WAS THE SHOBUIN WHO ASKED HIM!

YEA!! HEARD HE'S WAITING FOR A KIRISHITO PRIEST TO CONVERT!!!

WHERE IS PRINCESS ISHI!!! IT WOULD BE TERRIBLY RUDE IF SHE WASN'T HERE TO WELCOME THE KIRISHITO!!

I'LL HAVE SOMEONE SENT TO FIND OUT, MY LORD!

USELESS!

..THE PRINCESS IS ARRIVING! BUT IT REALLY ISN'T THANKS TO YOU, SIRE MITSURU!

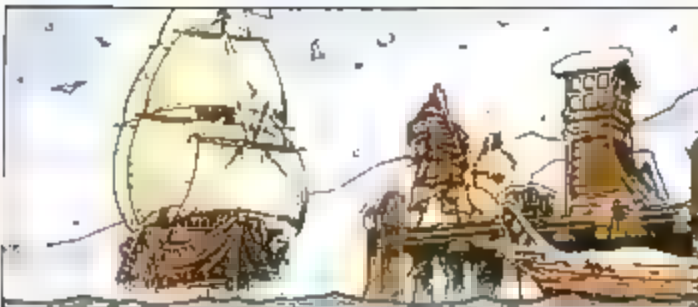
HO??

ASSASSINS INFILTRATED THE INN THIS MORNING, TO KILL HER! NONE OF YOUR UNDERLINGS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO STOP THEM. CHILDREN ARMED WITH STICKS WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER! BY CHANCE, THE KILLERS ESCAPED WITHOUT HAVING BEEN ABLE TO FIND LADY ISHI!!

I KNOW ALL OF THAT, SIRE MURASHIGE... AND MUCH MORE! MY INVALUABLE FRIEND FUJITASAN BROUGHT ME NEWS THIS MORNING. THE GUARDS WHO FAILED IN THEIR TASK WILL BE PUNISHED RUTHLESSLY! AS FOR THE REBELS, THEY HAVE BEEN SPOTTED LEAVING THE TOWN. SIRE MATSUMOTO IS ALREADY CHASING THEM!!

I.. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S REFRAINING ME FROM...

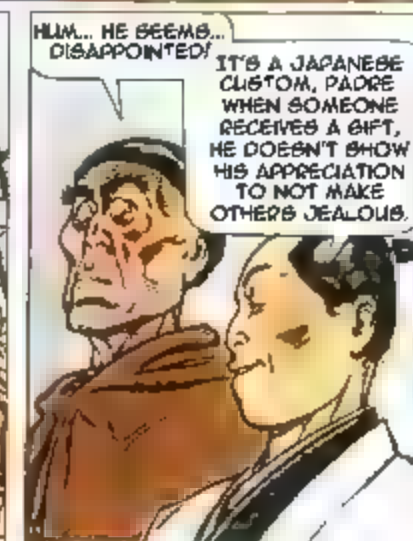
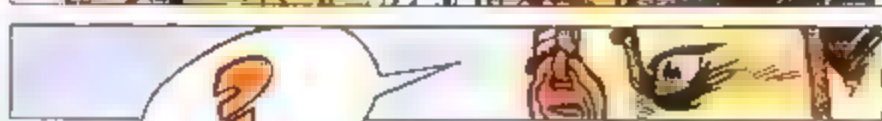
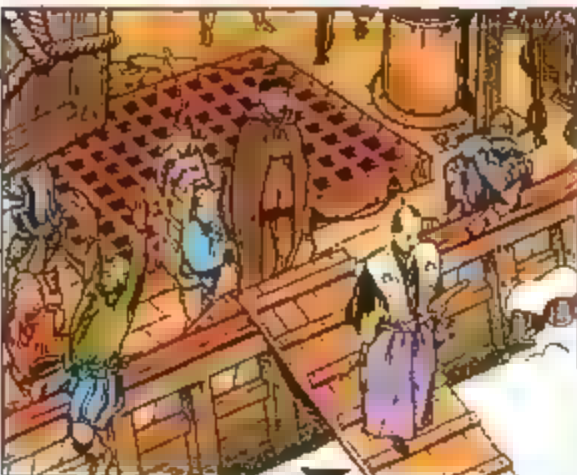
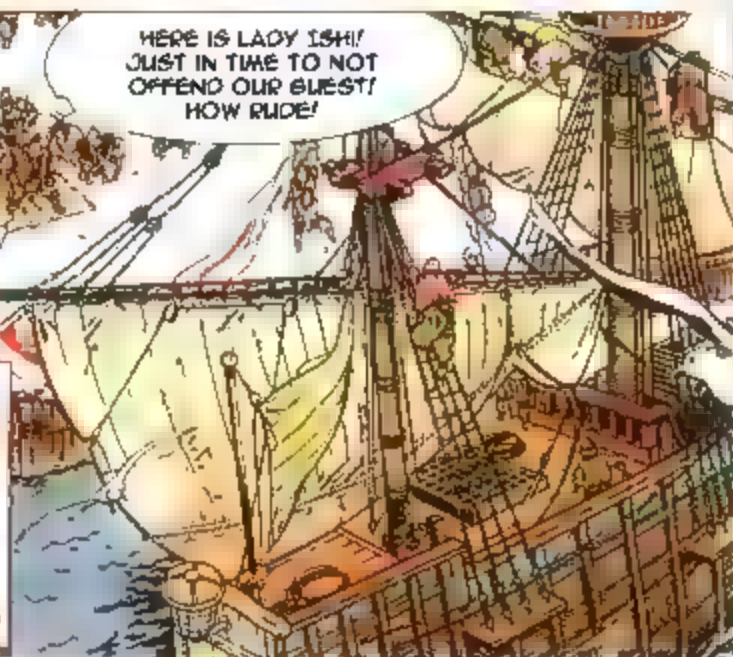
HOOOO!!!
HERE COMES THE BOAT OF THE KIRISHITO PRIEST!!



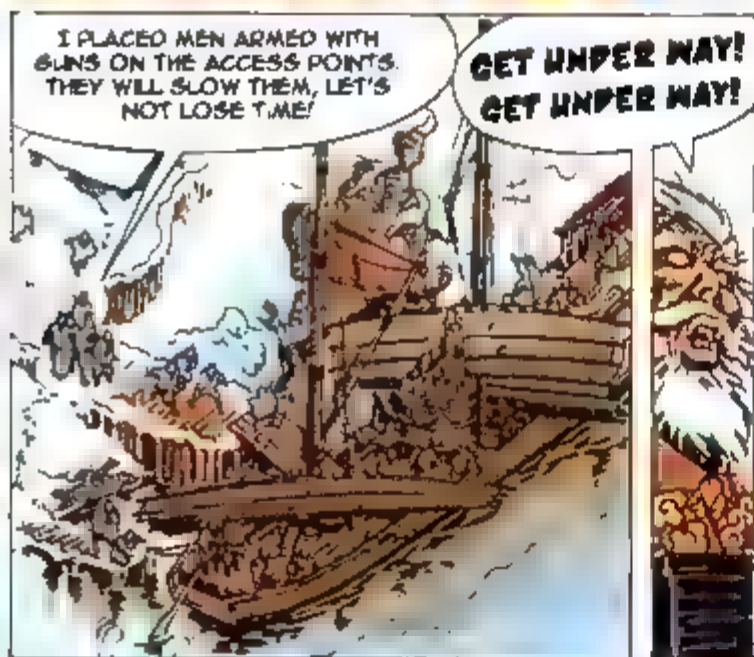
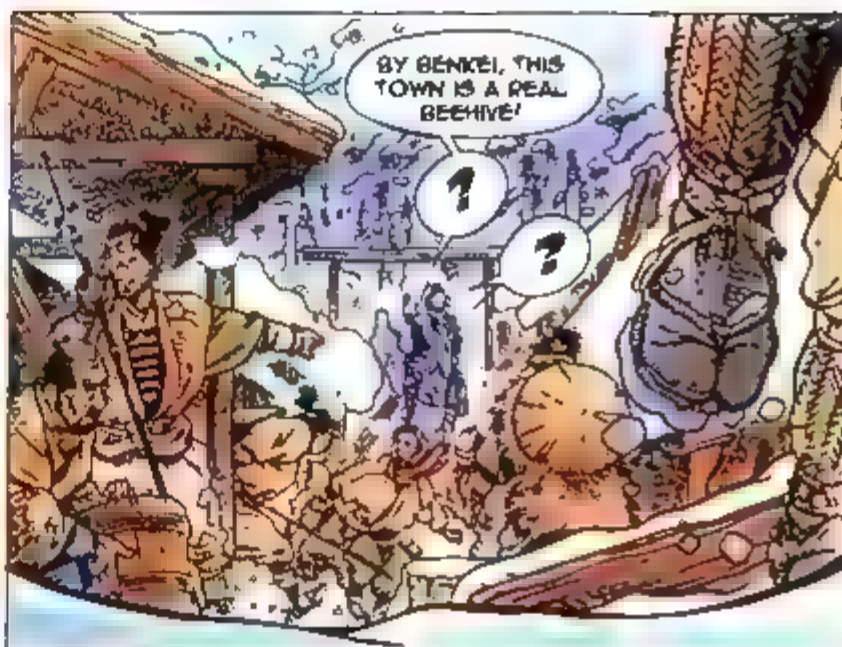
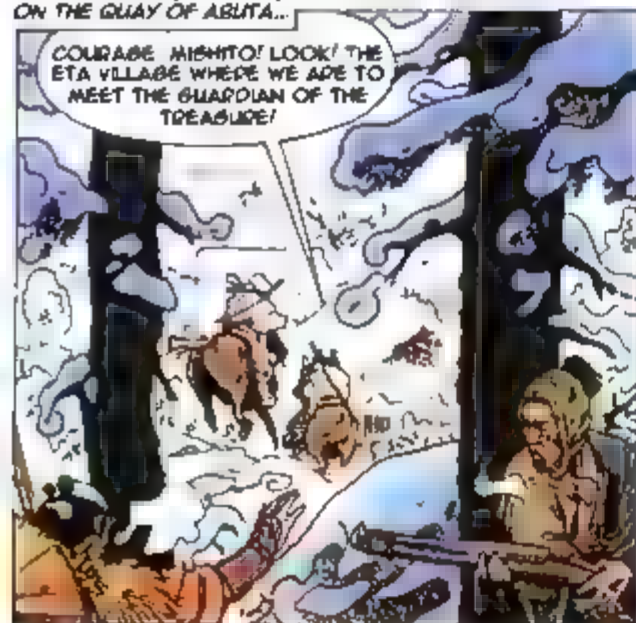
IT'S HUGE!



PPP! YOU'RE A
PROVINCIAL! IN
OSAKA I'VE SEEN
BOATS TEN TIMES
BIGGER!



WHILE MITSURU, AMAZED, IS CONTEMPLATING HIS GIFT ON THE QUAY OF ABUTA...



IF ONLY WE HAD A BOAT!

BUT... SIRE MAT-SUMOTO! WE COULD BORROW THE KRISHI-TO BE!

BY ADASAWA-NO-KAMI! YOU ARE RIGHT! THE KRISHI-TO PRIEST WHO CAME TO SEE SIRE MUSTURU WAS ON A BAG-BAGIAN BOAT ARMED WITH CANNONS. OUR MASTER CAN CONVINCE HIM TO LEND IT TO US.

LET US HEAD FOR ABUTA! THEY HAVEN'T ESCAPED US YET!

LET'S GO!

THEY'RE LEAVING! THEY DECIDED NOT TO FOLLOW US!

HUM. I HEAR HORSES GALLOPING! HE WHO GIVES UP ON TRACKING DOES NOT GALLOP! WE WILL HAVE SOME REST THOUGH, AND I OWE YOU EXPLANATIONS, NE?

I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU FOR THIRTEEN YEARS! SINCE SIRE YOSHIOA, MY MASTER, BOUND ME BY THIS MISSION! FINALLY I CAN CARRY IT OUT! MAY THE SPIRIT OF MY LATE MASTER WITNESS MY FIDELITY!

MY NAME IS SINKA. I WAS WORKING IN A SMALL TEMPLE NEAR THE BTA VILLAGE. ONE DAY, MEN CAME TO TELL ME THAT THE PREVIOUS DAYS' TEMPEST HAD THROWN THE WRECK OF A BAG-BAGIAN SHIP ON OUR SHORES.

...THERE WAS ONLY A BROKEN SHELL LEFT. I DECIDED TO EXPLORE IT. THERE WERE NO SURVIVORS ON BOARD. THE DECK CARRIED ALL OVER IT THE MARKS FROM THE BOO OF THE SEA.

BUT IN THE HOLD... I DISCOVERED A DEAL TREASURE!

I DISCREETLY REPORTED IT TO YOSHIDA. HE ORDERED ME TO HIDE THE TREASURE AND MAKE ANY TRACES OF THE BOAT DISAPPEAR. HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, MITSURU, WAS VISITING THE PROVINCE WITH HIS COURT. YOSHIDA DIDN'T WANT TO AROUSE HIS BREED.



ALAS... THE NIGHT OF THE BANQUET MITSURU HAD OUR LORD ASSASSINATED AND TOOK CONTROL OF THE HOSO-IF YOU KNOW THE REST...



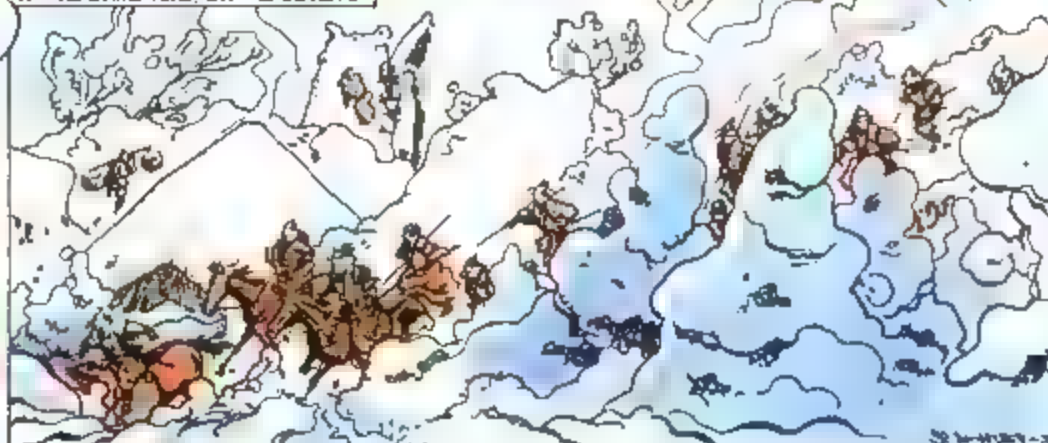
YES, BUNKA-SAN! SHIMURA YEMITSU, MY LATE MASTER, FOUND IN A SECRET ROOM OF THE CASTLE THE LORD'S SON AND DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE EXISTENCE OF THE ETAS' TREASURE. TODAY, BANDO HAS COME OF AGE. HE CAN LEAD HIS CLAN AND HAS DECIDED, THANKS TO THE TREASURE, TO RAISE AN ARMY AND MARCH ON ISHIKAWA.



SO THE SON OF OUR LORD IS ALIVE! MAY THE ETAS' TREASURE BE THE TOOL FOR HIS VENGEANCE!

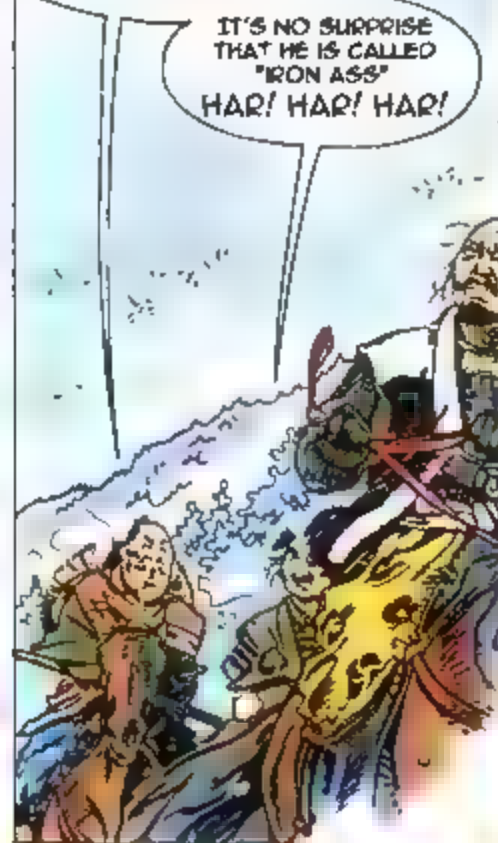


AT THE SAME TIME, ON THE COAST...



HERE IS ASUTA! AT LAST! AT THIS RHYTHM, MATSUMOTO WILL KILL OUR HORSES, AND US AT THE SAME TIME!

IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT HE IS CALLED "IRON ASS" HAR! HAR! HAR!



THE SHOGUN THAT I REPRESENT HERE, WOULD NEVER WANT TO MOCK A DAIMYO OF YOUR RANK! THE BUNS ARE ON BOARD THE SHIP!

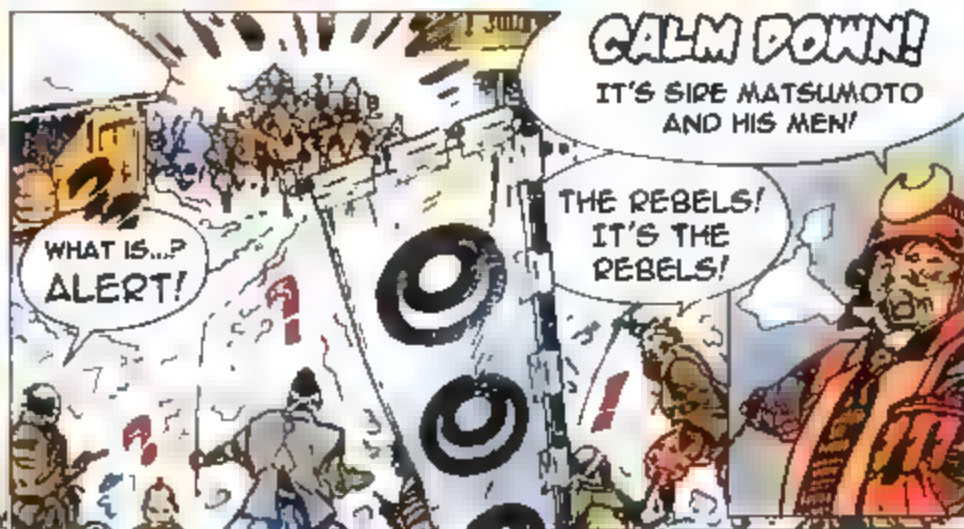


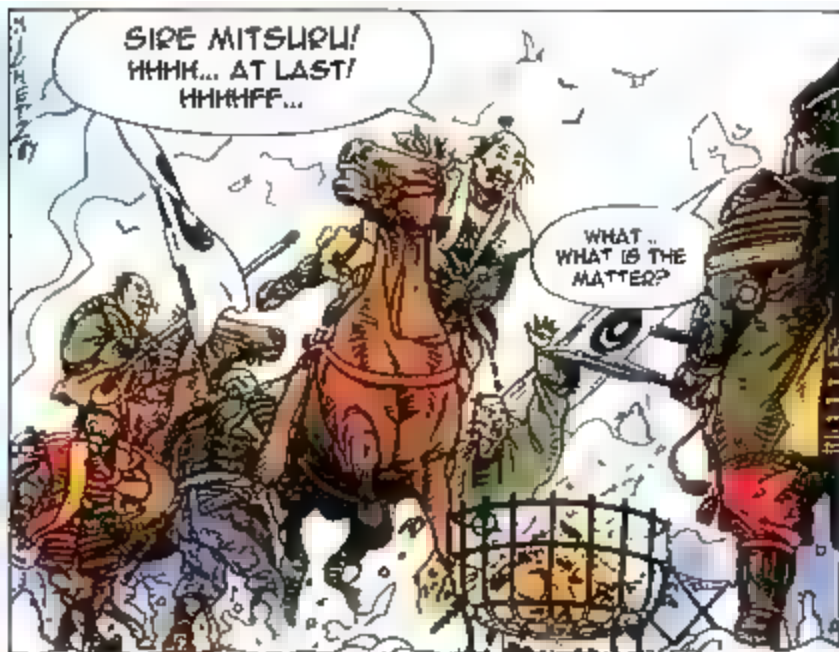
CALM DOWN!

IT'S SIRE MATSUMOTO AND HIS MEN!

WHAT IS...? ALERT!

THE REBELS! IT'S THE REBELS!





SIRE MITSURU!
HHHH... AT LAST!
HHHHFF...

WHAT...
WHAT IS THE
MATTER?



THEY GOT ON BOARD A SHIP, LORD, AND ARE
ESCAPING BY SEA! HHHH... THE TREASURE
MUST BE ON BOARD! ... I NEED THE KIRISHI-
TO'S SHIP, OR ELSE THEY WILL ESCAPE! ...
HHHHH...

UHP!



BUT... BUT THE KIRISHITO
IS OUR GUEST AND ALLY...
I CAN'T! IT WOULD BE...

PRAY EXCUSE MY
BOLDNESS, BUT IF YOU
TAKE HIS SHIP, MY
LORD, YOU WILL SEIZE
THE TREASURE AND,
MOREOVER, THE GUNS
WILL BE YOURS!



MY NEW ADVISER CONVINCED ME,
MATSUMOTO-SAN! ...YOU CAN TAKE
THE KIRISHITO'S BOAT!

WHAT... WHAT ARE THEY
SAYING? THEY'RE
TALKING ABOUT ME
AREN'T THEY?

SIRE... THANK YOU FOR
TRUSTING ME! I WILL
NOT DISAPPOINT YOU!

ONLY OF YOUR SHIP!
THEY WANT TO MAKE
USE OF IT



BUT... BUT THEY CAN'T! ...I
WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO GO
BACK TO EDO WITHOUT A
SHIP! ...HEEEY?

YOU WON'T EITHER WITHOUT
A HEAD! IT WOULD BE WISE
FOR YOU TO STAY CALM.
SIRE MATSUMOTO IS A
RATHER, HUM... IMPULSIVE
PERSON!



WHAT DOES THAT MONKEY
WANT FROM ME, PILOT?

!?

I THINK THEY WOULD LIKE
US TO LEAVE, SENOR!



I WILL REPORT THIS TO THE
SHOGUN... YES! THAT'S WHAT
I'M GOING TO DO!

I SUGGEST YOU STUDY ZEN. MY
FATHER. ITS KNOWLEDGE WILL
HELP YOU SURVIVE IN OUR
COUNTRY! NOW COME, I WILL
INTRODUCE YOU TO LADY TOKU-
GAWA ISHI-NO--MINAMOTO

GOING FULL SPEED AHEAD, THE ETAS' SHIP BARLED TOWARDS HONDO WITHOUT SPOTTING ANY FOLLOWERS...

AHEAD!
MUTSU BAY!

WELL, MISHITO-SANP DOES
YOUR INJURY HURT SO MUCH
THAT YOU CAN'T APPRECIATE
THE BEAUTY OF THIS VIEW?

MMMP

THOSE CLIFFS AHEAD THEY
BELONG TO THE YUKIS, ARE
THEY FRIENDS OR FOE? I
DON'T LIKE HAVING TO SET
THE TREASURE BACK ON
THEIR TERRITORY!

DO NOT WORRY WE WON'T HAVE TO LAND IN
HONDO, IT HAS JUST BEEN REPORTED THAT
WE HAVE REACHED OUR DESTINATION.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I DON'T..

PEACE, MY YOUNG AND
IMPETUOUS FRIEND! YOUR
QUESTIONS SHALL BE
ANSWERED SOON!

BUT, WHAT ARE YOU
DOING? DO YOU MEAN
THAT THE TREASURE IS IN
THE DEPTHS OF THE SEAP?

YOU WILL HAVE TO UNDRESS AND
FOLLOW ME IF YOU WANT THE ANSWER
TO YOUR QUESTION! ...OR MAYBE YOU
WILL BE PATIENT ENOUGH TO WAIT
FOR MY RETURN?

BY THE GODS!
WAIT! I'M COMING!

IF YOU MEET WITH THE BOO OF THE SEA, TELL
MAM I SAID HELLO! HAH! HAH! HAH!



MOONING BY
SENKEI'S BLOOD,
IT IS FREEZING!

IF THE BARREL IS ABOVE
US, YOU CAN TELL THEM
TO LOWER IT, KATO!

YES SENSEY
YOU CAN
LOWER IT!



HEY! BE CAREFUL WITH
THE BARREL OR YOU
WILL...



THIS WAY SAMURAI
STAY INSIDE OR YOU
WILL DIE!



?

TAKE YOUR SEATS
AND FOR BOO'S SAKE,
DO NOT MOVE!



HE! HE! HE! FUNNY, ISN'T IT? THIS TECHNIQUE
IS USED BY THE SOUTHERN BADGAPANS TO
GET THE PRESENT FROM THEIR WEDDINGS WHEN I
RECEIVED MY MARRIAGE. I DECIDED THAT THE
BEST HIDING PLACE WOULD BE WHERE IT
SHOULD HAVE BEEN...



SOME FIFTEEN KENS
UNDER THE SURFACE OF
THE WATER, THAT IS!
LOOK! DO YOU NOT
SEE A TREASURE
UNDER YOU FEET?



LOOK AGAIN! IT MUST
BE CLOSE TO US!

YES! THERE! I CAN
MAKE OUT A DARK
SHADOW THAT
LOOKS LIKE A... A

YES SAMURA! **A GUN!**
A HUGE GUN! JAPAN NEVER
KNEW A BIGGER ONE! BUT WE
HAVE TO RETRIEVE IT FROM THE
SEA AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
OUR DIVING CASE WON'T HOLD
AGAINST THE PRESSURE MUCH
LONGER

...OF THE TEN ROWS OF
AMMUNITION WE WILL ONLY
TAKE FIVE. OUR SHIP MIGHT
NOT BE ABLE TO CARRY
THEM ALL, SO NOW!



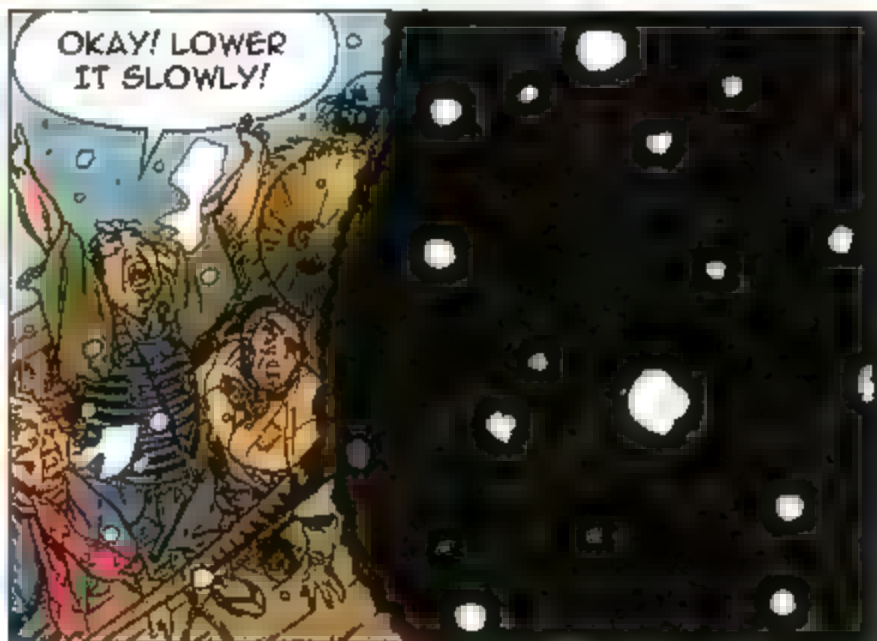
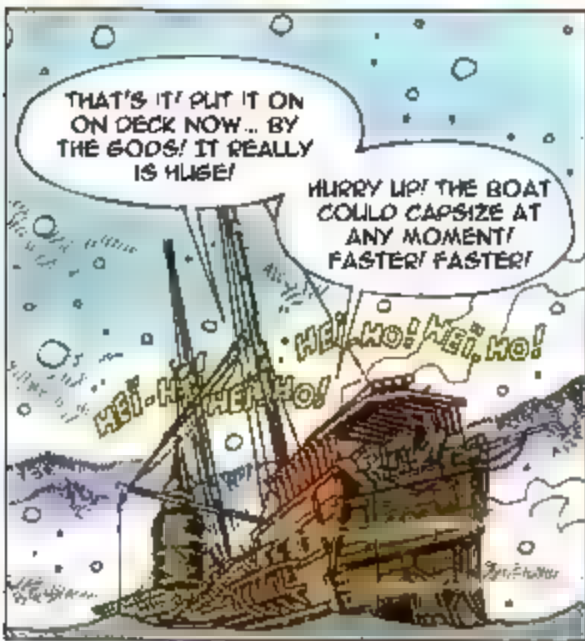
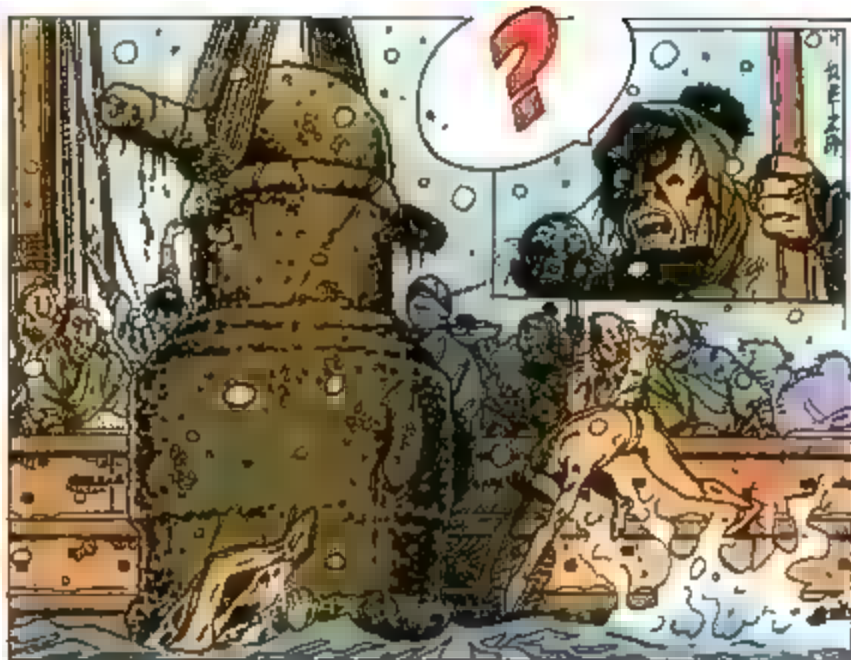
HEFF HEFF...MASTER! THE
FIRST ROPE IS ATTACHED!
HEFF...

VERY WELL! KATO, TIE
IT TO ONE OF THESE
BALLOONS!

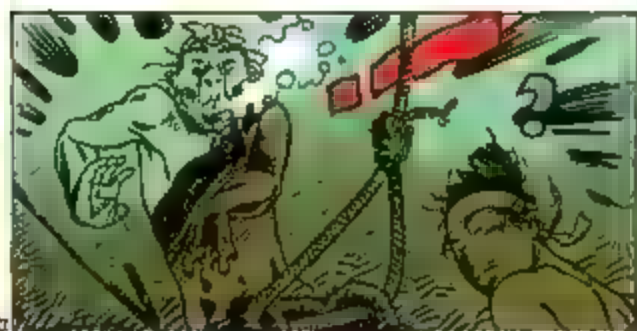
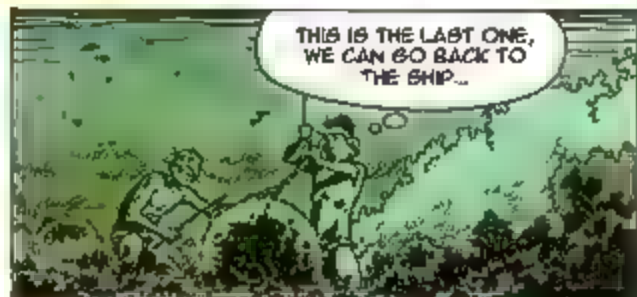
THERE! THE FIRST
ROPE! THE OTHER
WILL FOLLOW SOON!
LET'S GET TO WORK!

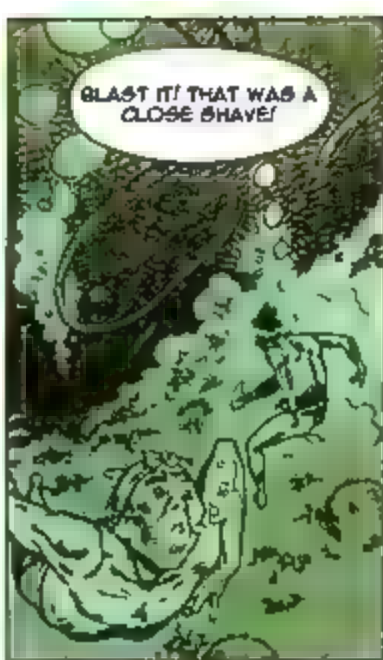
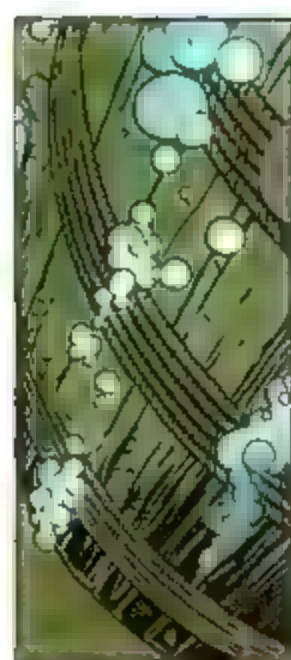
THEN, AFTER ONE HOUR OF EXHAUSTING
UNDERWATER WORK...

LET'S PRAY THE
SHIP WILL HOLD



AFTER SOME TIME UNDERWATER, FIGHTING AGAINST THE COLD AND THE EXHAUSTION, THE MEN RETRIEVED FIVES ROWS OF AMMUNITION...





BLAST IT! THAT WAS A
CLOSE SHAVE!



WHAT HAPPENED
UP THERE?
ANYWAY,
WITHOUT THE
CAGE... WE
DON'T HAVE
MUCH CHOICE
WE HAVE TO
SWIM UP!



QUICKLY! QUICKLY! GET ON
BOARD! A HANDEAN SHIP IS
COMING OUR WAY!

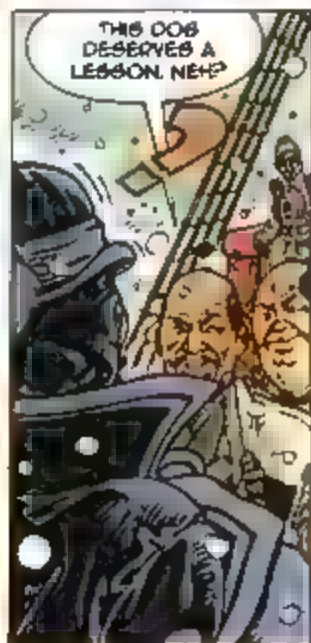


PHAAA! TOBEI-SAN.
THE REBELS CAN'T
ESCAPE US NOW!



I BELIEVE YOU ARE THE
LEADERS OF THOSE YELLOW
MONKEYS? YOU MUST KNOW
WE CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER OR
THE COMING STORM WILL SINK
US!

WHAT DOES THAT BAR-
BARIAN WANT? DOESN'T
HE KNOW HIS TOUCHING
ME IS AN INSULT?

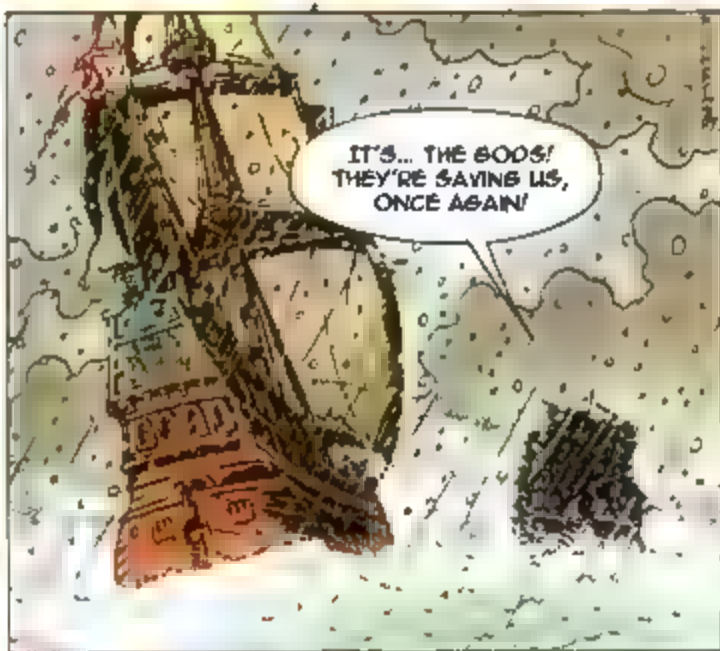


THIS DOG
DESERVES A
LESSON, NEH?



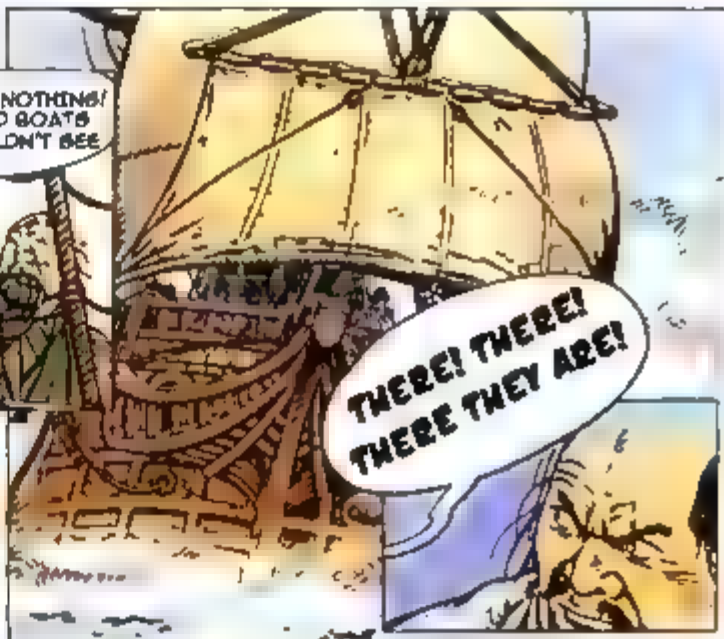
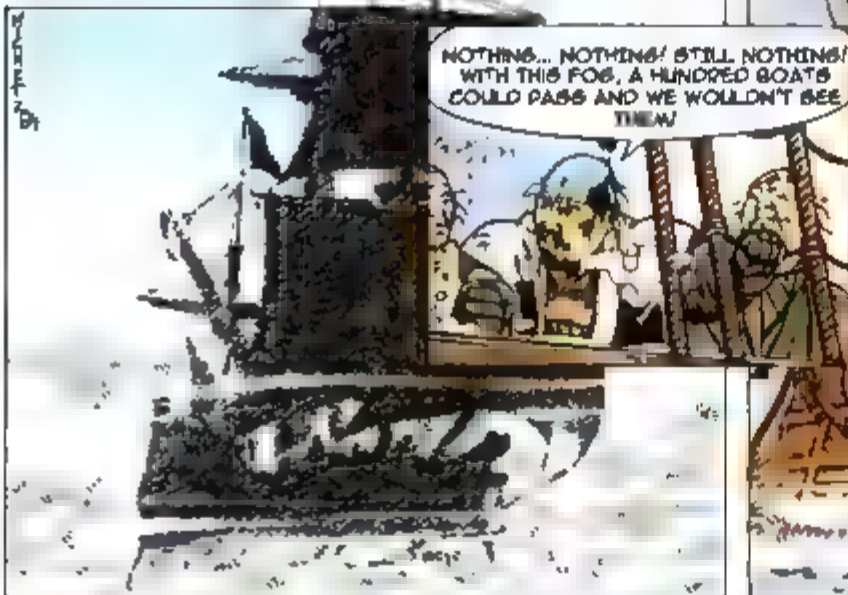
TO STARBOARD!

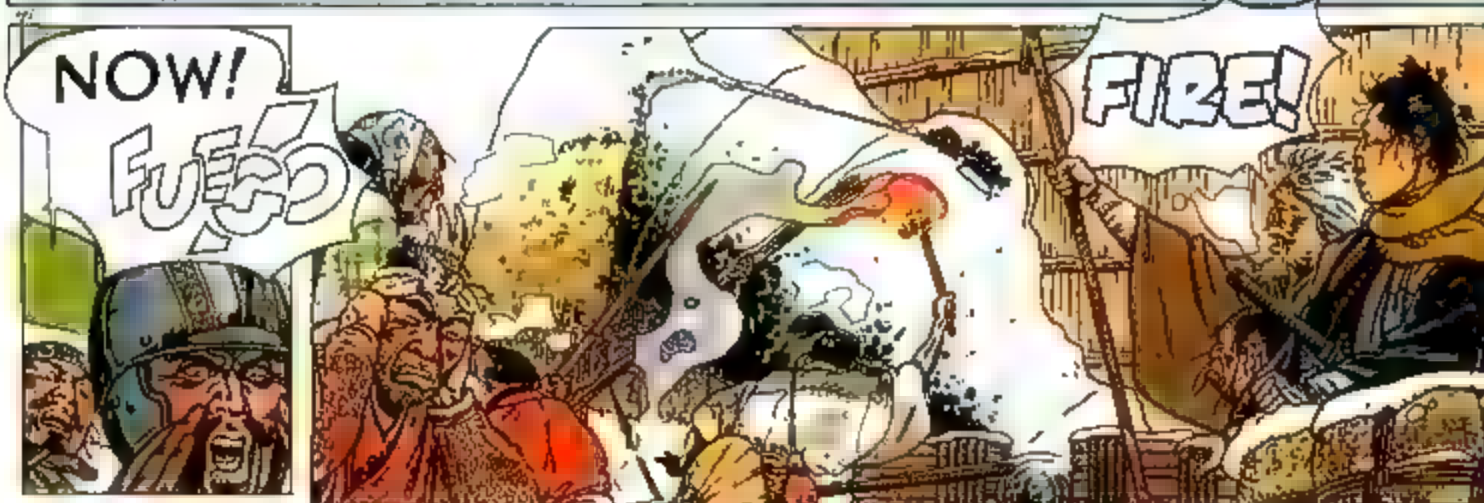
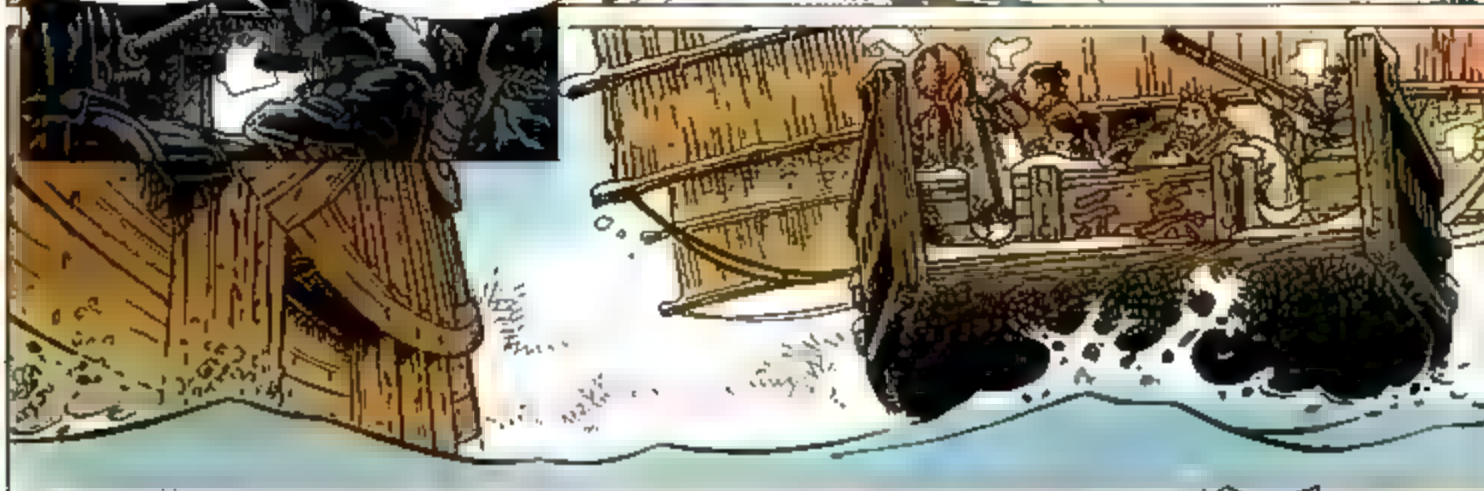
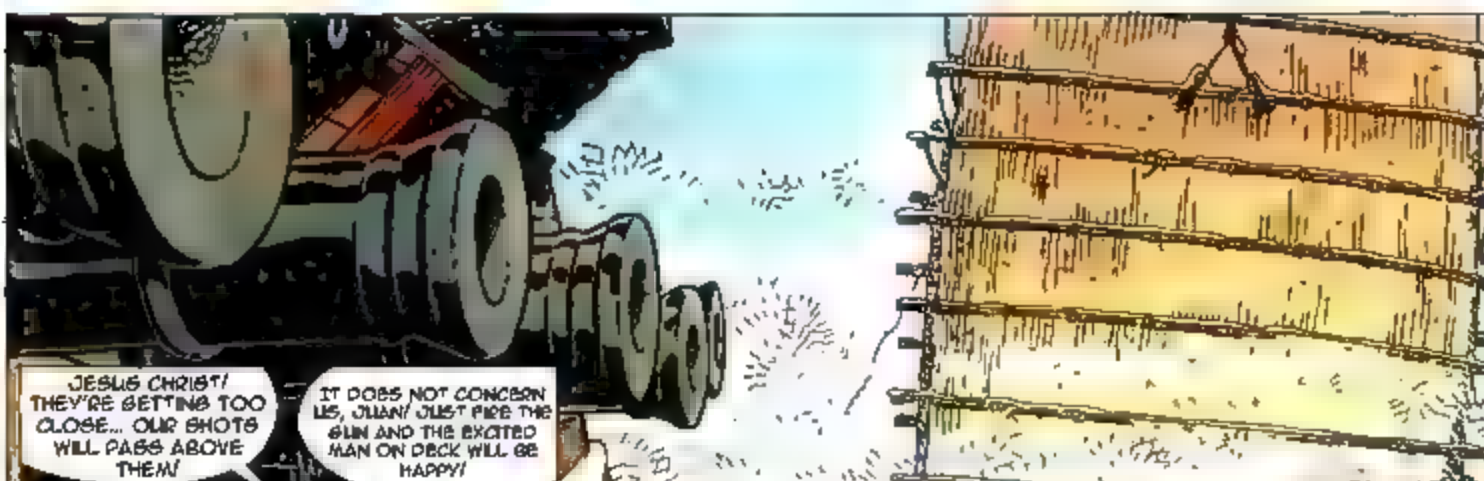
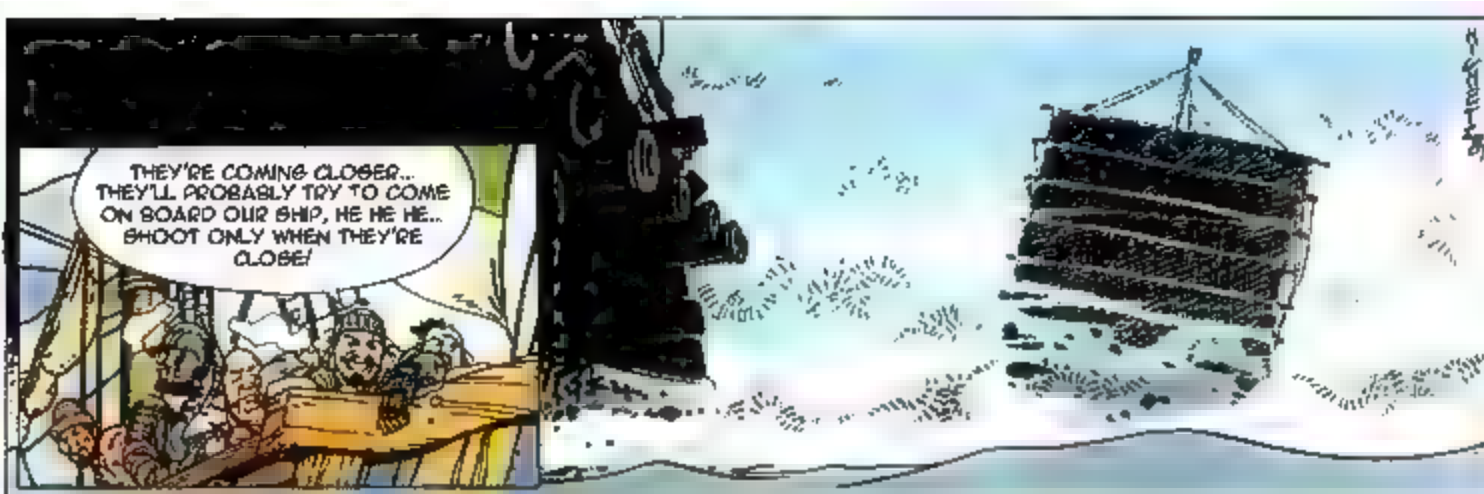
TAKE THE
WIND!



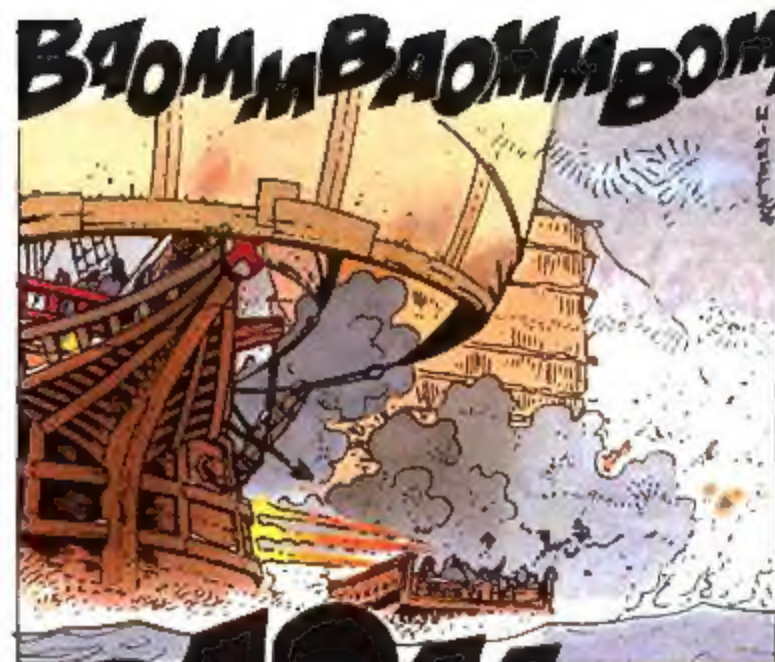
IT'S... THE BOOS!
THEY'RE SAYING US,
ONCE AGAIN!

THE MORNING CAME, AND WITH IT, THE FOG, JUST ON THE SURFACE OF THE SEA.

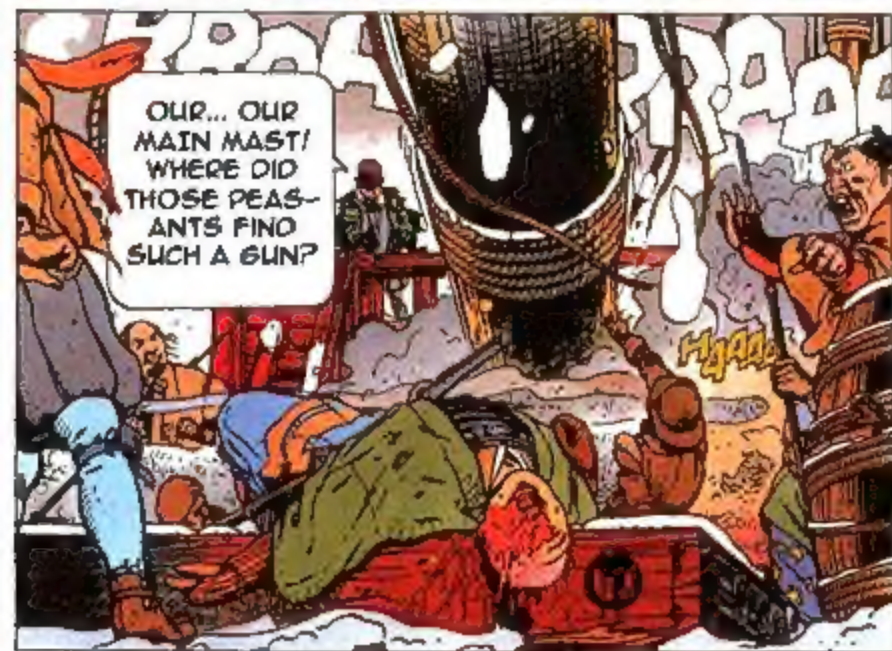




ВЛОМ ВЛОМ ВЛОМ ВЛОМ ВЛОМ ВЛОМ



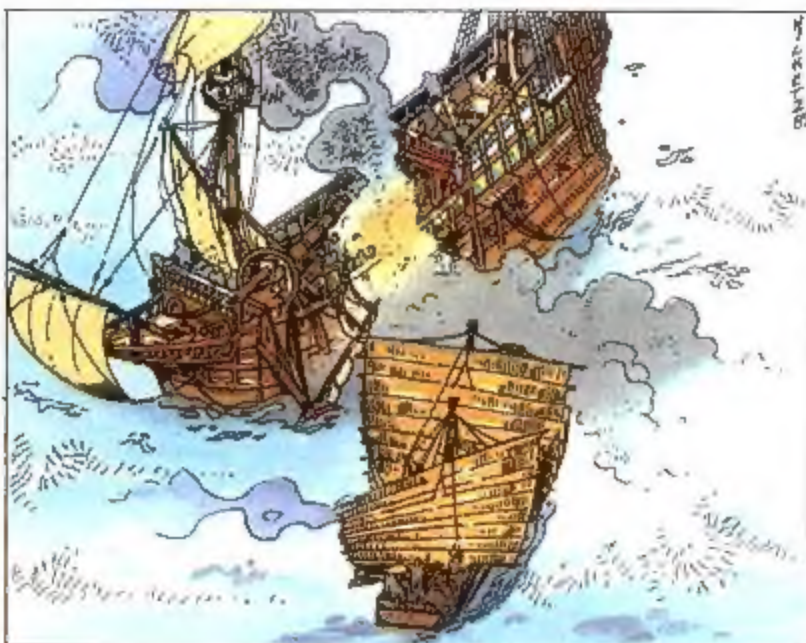
ВЛОМ ИЛИ



BUNKA-SAN! BUNKA-SAN! WE
HIT IT! THEY LOST THEIR
MAIN MAST!

BY THE SOOS! ...WE DID IT! ...
THEY WON'T CATCH US NOW!
QUICKLY, SAMURAI, HEAD
TOWARDS THE BAY OF THE
VOLCANOES! THE SOONER
WE ARE IN HOKKAIDO, THE
BETTER!

YOU ARE RIGHT,
BUNKA-SAN, SIRE
BANDO IS WAITING
FOR US. TOO BAD...



THE CHASE IS OVER, MAT-
SUMOTO SAN, WE HAVE TO
ADMIT IT... THOSE SWINES
ARE ESCAPING US ONCE
AGAIN!

RHAAAA!
WHY? WHY?

AND THAT DAY, YOU
WILL GET A TASTE
OF MY SWORD!

MATSUMOTO?
THE MAN WHO
DISHONOURED
SIRE YEMITSU, MY
MASTER.

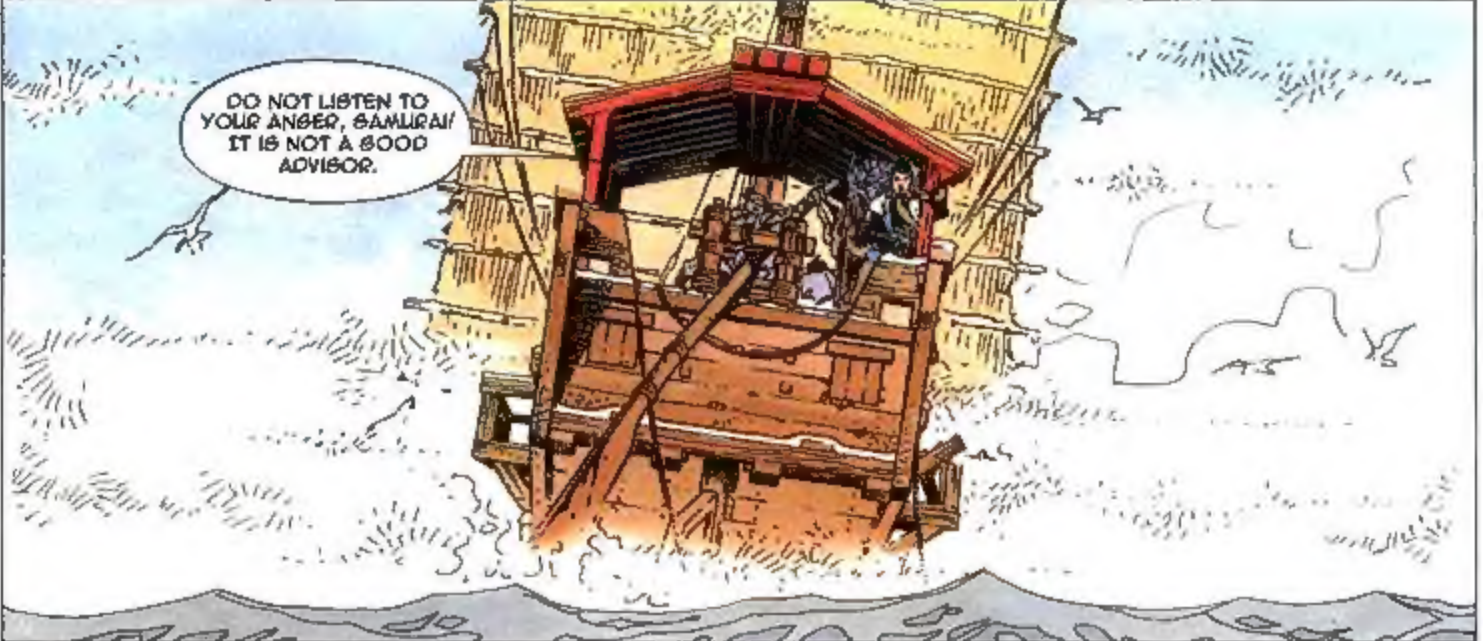
WHOEVER BE YOU SAMURAI,
I, MIYAJIMA MATSUMOTO
SWEAR THAT JAPAN WILL
BE TOO SMALL FOR YOU TO
HIDE! SOONER OR LATER I
WILL FIND YOU!

I AM NAKAMURA KOGAR-
ATSU! YOU KILLED AND
HUMILIATED MY MASTER!
AS SOON AS I AM FREE
FROM MY MISSION, I
WILL BE YOURS, DOG!


STAY ALIVE REBEL
UNDERLING! STAY
ALIVE FOR ME!

I SHOULD HAVE
FINISHED THIS
YOUNG COCK THE
FIRST TIME I MET
HIM...

KO... KOGARATSU?




DO NOT LISTEN TO
YOUR ANGER, SAMURAI!
IT IS NOT A GOOD
ADVISOR.



ANYWAY, YOU NOW BELONG TO SIRE
KISHIJI BANDO-NO-MINOWARA, AND
HE DOESN'T WANT TO WASTE THE
LIFE OF HIS SAMURAI'S ON TRIVIAL
VENGEANCES!

THEN, MAY THE GODS PUT ME
ON A BATTLEFIELD, FACING
MATSUMOTO, ONE DAY!...

KOBARATSU DOESN'T KNOW HIS WISH WILL COME TRUE. SOON, LEADING SIRE BANDO'S ARMY, HE'LL CARRY DEATH ALL OVER HOKKAIDO. IT WILL BE "THE TORN UP SUMMER"!



THE END

